TO

ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY

&

CULTURE

IN

[FULL QUESTIONS & ANSWERS]

(From Earliest times to 1000 A.D)

By

Professor Gokhale & Kulkarni

SPECIAL FEATURES —

(1) Presents the subject in a very simple, lucid and clear language

(2) All the standard authors are consulted in preparing this book.

(3) Questions are arranged in chapters according to topics to facilitate clear understanding

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PREFACE

is a matter of great satisfaction to publish the seventh edition of this book within Eight years of the publication This shows that the book has proved very useful to the student world

It covers the entire course in Ancient Indian History and Culture in **Questions and Answers form** according the syllabus of Indian Universities.

We have selected all the questions very carefully. Hence students can safely rely on this book.

We are very thankful to number of Students and Professors for their kind letters and valuable sugestions

—*Authors*

SYLLABUS

Outlines of Ancient ndian History and Culture

1. The subject is to be studied in broad outline only-minute details of chronology, etc. are not to be dwelt upon

2. Graeater emphasis is to be placed upon cultural history rather than on political history.

3. Main trends and features are to be stressed rather than minute details of all the historical and cultural topics mentioned below

Main Topics

1 *Sources* (Brief introduction)

(*a*) Pre-history Materials from Archaeology : Relics, Monuments, Inscriptions, Coins, Ancient scripts etc.

(*b*) Historical, and literary works : Vedic, Classical Sanskrit, Prakrit and South India.

2. *Political History* .

Aryan immigration and expansion.

The Magadha Empire · Age of the Mauryas.

Post-Mauryan foreign immigration and invasions, Minor Dynasties.

The Magadha Empire . Age of the Guptas.

The Age of Harsha, Chalukyas, Pallavas, etc.

Kingdom of Western and Northern India, the Deccan and South India, down to 1000 A D.

Cultural History

Earlier and later Stone–Age, the Age of Metals.

The Indus Valley Civilization.

Social and Economic Conditions, corporate life during (*a*) the Vedic period, (*b*) the post Vedic period.

Religion and Philosophy during successive epochs.

Buddhism, Jainism and Brahaminical Hinduism

Literature · Vedic Samhitas, Brahmanas, Upanishe(and Sutras. Sacred books of the Jains and the Buddhists Secular Sanskrit Literature Sangam literature of South India

Arts . Architecture, Sculpture Iconography.

Greater India

Colonization, Expansion of Indian Commerce. Contacts with the external world : China, S. E Asia and the West.

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the source of Study of Hindu India; Bhagavad Gita; Manus Dharma Shastra, Ashta Dhyayi (Grammar) Bhagvata religion and Krishan; Bhakti Religion of Devotion

. **Buddhist India** **(61–78)**

Rise of new religious movements in the 6th century B C, Life and teaching of Buddha; main teachings of Buddhism and the causes of its success in India; Buddhism on the social and political history of India, Mahavira and his teaching, Economic, Social and religious life during the age of Buddhism and Jainism. Social, political and religious condition of India prior to the invasion of Alexander

. **The Rise of the Magadha Empire** **(79–85)**

Occupation of Indus valley by the Persians; Alexandar the Great, Saisunaga and the Nanda Dynasties

The Mauryas **(86–115)**

Maurya Dynasty, Kautilya's Arthshastra; Bindusara; Ashoka as man and monarch, Megasthenes and his description of India, religious Condition in Mauryan Age, Buddhistic System of Education during the Maurya Period, Maurya Art and Civilization, decline and fall of the Mauryan Empire.

8. The Sungas, Andhras and Foreign Rulers **(116–136)**

Main theories of the Sungas and their position in ancient Indian History; Political and Cultural activities of the Andhras, Indo-Greek kings, The Parthians· the Sakas.

9. The Guptas· **(137–155)**

Origin of the Guptas; Charcter and achievements of Samudragupta; Career of Chandragupta II, The reigns of Kumargupta, Skandagupta and their followers, Golden Age of the Guptas; Fa-hien, the Chinese traveller, Administrative machinery of the Guptas, The downfall of the Gupta

10. Hunas and the Vardhanas **(156–172)**

Hunas the history of the Vardhanas before the time of Harsha, account of Harsha, Administrative system of Harsha, Social and economics conditions in times of Harsha, Learning and literature under Harsha, Hiuen Tsang or Yuan Chawang, Religious Conditions in India during Harsha's time

11. The Rajput and the Deccan **(173–180)**

The Political disitegration that followed the death of Harsha, Origin of Rajputs, The Early Chalukyas, The Rashtra Kutas; The Pallavas

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Ancient Indian History & Culture

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Q. 1. What are the characteristic features of the Ancient Indian Culture?

Ans. The first characteristic of Indian culture is its **antiquity.** The discovery of the Indus Valley civilization has pushed back the antiquity of Indian civilization to a very remote past It is undoubtedly one of the earliest civilizations of the world and according to some scholars it is the earliest civilization. As such, India has a place of pride as the cradle of civilization. Moreover, Indian civilization and culture spread to a very wide area and have thus influenced the culture of the world to a very great extent

Indian culture is not only ancient but also continuous **Continuity** is its second remarkable feature Since the time of the earliest civilization–the Indus Valley civilization, there has been a continuous stream of culture down to the modern period Our religion, social organization, customs, manners, patterns of living, etc, are living proofs of this remarkable continuity In no civilization, do we find such unbroken continuity The early civilizations of Sumer, Babylon and Egypt have simply vanished. They did not leave behind them any considerable impression Indian culture, on the other hand, has remained to this day, withstanding several onslaughts of foreigners

The continuity of our civilization is due to its **inner vitality** which is its third characteristic. No culture could survive for thousands of years without such inner strength The basis of the civilization has been sound and it is rich in its contents. The culture has been rooted in the deep knowledge of human nature and embraces all aspects of life Being, thus a full civilization, it became strong. All aspects of life namely, economic, social, fully developed and thus the culture became rich Ii is to be noted that the Indians received the contents of their culture from all quarters without hesitation. This open mind and absorption of various elements from different cultures and peoples are responsible for the flexibility of the Indian culture is rich, full and manysided and, therefore, it has been able to survive all these years

Finally, the fourth characteristic feature of the Indian culture is its unity **amidst diversity.** In spite of the fact that India has a variety of physical factors, races, languages, religions, etc., and that India was attacked by several foreigners, there developed single culture throughout the length and breadth of this vast country The basic values of life, religious and spiritual beliefs and aspirations, the general mode of life etc., have been the same They have been enriched by the variety and they are in complete harmony with each other The remarkable unity amidst diversity is a very significant aspect of our culture Recently we find several people in India claiming different 'cultures' for themselves on the basis of some unimportant factors like dress, language, food, etc. It is vital for the unity of India to remember that all people in India, whatever their language or dress, belong to a

single common culture and this has been so since times immemorial As pointed out earlier, the fundamental values of life are the same and they can be achieved by a complete harmony and cooperation between the various groups in India It is therefore important for the students of Indian history to understand these remarkable features of our culture which enlighten and guide us in the complexities of present day life

Q. 2. Write a brief note on the physical features and the people of India.

Ans. The geographical factors of a country affect the life and progress of its people Therefore, it is necessary to note the physical features of India and how they have affected the course of her progress throughout the ages.

In the north there is the highest mountain range and in south, west and east there is the ocean Thus bounded by natural frontiers, India has a sense of unity From ancient times, the territory of India has been welldefined The Vishnu Purana says, "The country that lies north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains (Himalayas) is called Bharata, there dwell the descendants of Bharata" The unity of India has been emphasized by political philosophers, poets and religious preachers. Numerous kings strived to achieve the political unity of this vast sub-continent. The cultural unity of India was achieved by the all-embrasing religion, Hinduism.

India is divided by mountains and rivers The Vindhya mountains separate the North from the South In the north there is Punjab-the land of five rivers, a centre of ancient civilization The Indus valley is now

in Pakistan. Another plain is watered by the rivers Ganga and Yamuna These two rivers have created a large tract of rich, fertile soil The South is protected by ocean on all sides. The Deccan plateau is of rich black soil. The two mountain ranges along both the coasts, especially the Sahya mountains have created areas of thick jungles yielding several types of trees, plants, etc., useful for industry, timber and medicine The Himalayan region has cold winters, the Northern plain has cool winters and hot summers, the Deccan has a moderate climate and the South has a continuously hot climate.

A unique feature of India is its Monsoon, the system of rains Rains pour down only in an almost definite period, ranging from June to October, in different parts The Monsoons are proverbially uncertain Since ancient times, major disasters such as flood, famine and plagues have been difficult to check But as compared with other ancient civilizations, India has been blessed by kind and generous nature Indians accept both the severity of anger and generosity of Nature without complaint

Life seems to have begun in India very early We have traces of the stone-age people Gradually, these aborigines developed into a highly civilized people They were conquered by the Aryas The original inhabitants are now represented by tribes such as Kolis, Bhils, Santhals, Mundas, Todas, etc The early people seem to have been Dravidians They occupied a vast area comprising of the Indus valley, Baluchistan, Central Asia, Punjab, etc. Traces of their civilization are also found recently in the South as well Apart from the Aryas,

and the Dravidians, several other people such as Mongolians, Greeks, etc came to India and settled here All the races were mixed freely and the present population cannot claim to be of any single race.

The physical features affect the character and civilization of the people It is said that the generous Nature and the unreliable monsoon have made Indians fatalistic But this is not true The facts of history reveal that the people of India have been, since times immemorial, quite vigorous and cheerful. The immense irrigation works, splendid temples, long campaigns of armies and colonization and the like reveal the vitality of the people If the climate had any effect on the Indian character, it was to develop a love of care and comfort, an addiction to simple pleasures and luxuries, so freely given by nature The study of literature, art and architecture proves that the Indians were in the ancient quite vigorous and full of zeal for life. Dr. A. L. Basham says, "India was a cheerful land, whose people, each finding a rich in a complex and slowly evolving social system, reached a higher level of kindness and gentleness in their mutual relationship than any other nation of antiquity For this, as well as for her great achievements in religion, literature, art and mathematics, one European student at least would record his admiration for her ancient culture " He further says, "Our overall impression is that in no other parts of the ancient world were the relations of man and man, of man and the state, so fair and humane. In no other early civilization were slaves so few in number, and in no other ancient law-books are their rights so well protected as in the Arthashastra No other ancient law-

giver proclaimed such ideals of fair play in battle as did Manu. To us the most striking feature of ancient Indian civilization is its humanity"

Q. 3 Give an account of the sources of ancient Indian History

Ans. The source of ancient Indian history are as follows :

(A) Archaeological Evidence :

(i) Excavations and Monuments.
(ii) Inscriptions
(iii) Coins

(B) Ancient Historical Writings

(C) Accounts of the Foreign Travellers.

A (i) **Archaeology**

Thanks to the archaeological discoveries in Sind and Punjab, we learn of the Indus Valley Civilization which is as old as five thousand years From the monuments and buildings we learn about the religion and aesthetic tastes of the people They help us in ascertaining the power and glory of ancient dynasties

(ii) **Inscriptions**

Inscriptions constitute the most authentic source of our information about ancient Indian History. Inscriptions are engraved on stone or copper plates on certain important occasions They are found in all parts of India, written in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Dravidian languages Some of them are known for their literary style. These inscriptions are generally commemorative, dedicatory or

donative, that is to say, they record either an important political event or the grant of a land From these inscriptions, it becomes easier to date a political event.

(iii) Coins ·

Our knowledge of the Indo–Greek kings and the Parthian rulers in mainly derived from the coins which they imprinted in their time. The coins help us in fixing the date of historical events. Coins also inform us about the taste and religion of a king From the coins of we learn that Samudragupta was a great lover of music From the figure of Kumardevi on the coins of Chandragupta I, we infer that he was much indebted to the Lichchavi princess The coins of Kanishka inform us about the religious conditions of the period as well as the religious outlook of the ruler.

(B) Ancient Historical Writings :

We have already seen how the Vedas, the Puranas, the epics of the Ramayan and the Mahabharata and such other literary works help us in knowing about the social, political and economic conditions of a period of which we have no recorded history.

From Mudrakshasa of Visakhadatta, we have come to know about the origin of the founder of the Maurya empire as well as the character of Kautilya Banabhatta's Harsha Charita gives us glimpses of Harsha's reign Prithviraja Ras gives us an account of Prithviraj Chauhan

(C) Accounts of Foreigners ·

These accounts supplement the information collected from the indigenous sources. The memoirs of Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador and the travel notes of the two Chinese pilgrims illustrate the point

CHAPTER II

PREHISTORIC INDIA

Q 1 Describe the Palaeolithic (Old Stone) Age and mention the cultural activities of its men.

Ans. The word palaeolithic comes from Greek language, it is a combination of two words and means old stone. The age which followed the Palaeolithic age is called Neolithic age which means "The New Stone Age" The adjectives 'old' and 'new' indicate the real difference between the achievements and development of the peoples of these two 'Ages' The only common element between them is the use of stone implements, yet there was a vast difference in their manner of living and outlook of life.

It is impossible to collect the exact information about the earliest inhabitants of India The only source of our information about them is relics which they left buried under the ground

The old stone implements and bones of certain animals are found out from Narmada Valley and other parts of India

Stone implements were prepared from hard rock known as "quartzite" These stone implements (fashioned in various forms and shapes) were used for cutting, hunting and boring

The use of stone for implements leads us to believe that Palaeolithic people were ignorant of metals and their uses, and that they lived unsettled and nomadic life of hunters Perhaps they were in constant dread of

wild and savage animals and lived in caves They knew neither pottery nor farming, the use of fire was yet to be discovered

They lived on flesh and wild vegetables They resembled Negrito race like present natives of Andaman, having dark skin, wooly hair, flat nose and short stature Their dialect was primitive and which is still spoken by the Kolis, the Gonds and the Santhals who seem to have descended from the men of Palaeolithic Age

It is not known how they disposed off the dead bodies. They might be exposing the dead to the wild animals. They had no special religion yet it is believed that they might be using sacrifices to appease the spirits or the natural powers such as storm, rain, mountains and floods which frightened them.

Though they must have their fore runners nothing is known of them These 'quartzite' men are ranked as the earliest inhabitants of India

Q 2. Write what you know of the Neolithic (New Stone) Age and Mention the cultural activities of its men

Ans The Neolithic man made considerable progress over the Man of the Palaeolithic Age He used stone implements which were smooth, polished and well chipped In Bellary district of Madras an ancient factory was unearthed which contained stone tools in every stage of manufacture. Besides, they invested bow and arrows, yet, excepting gold, they wefr ignorant of other metals

Since they had learnt the art of cultivating land they lived more or less a settled life. They lived in

villages where they built small houses, the walls of which they decorated They also domesticated animals as cow, goat and dog They lived on fruits, corn and meat.

Besides the use of fire, they knew the arts of pottery, of spinning cotton and wool as also of weaving them into clothes. They constructed boats; and glazed and painted pottery.

With the discovery of agriculture, the neolithic man solved the problem of food and settled in one place. The early civilizations were developed in river valleys where men could secure fertile land, ample water and natural protection against climate, wild animals and rival tribes. Man would devote more time and energy for civilizing himself or making his life more comfortable. The social institutions like private property and family as well as social institutions like private property and family as social ethics, absolutely necessary for social life and progress of civilization took form during this age. The foundations of all future progress were laid by the neolithic men

Neolithic men buried the dead and constructed tombs These tombs are called 'dolmens.' Along with the dead, they buried all his belongings.

They worshipped nature and gods. Gods were alloted certain works e g , the god of hill was represented as a hunter, and the farmer worshipped the sky god who sent rain for his field They indulged in drinking and dancing with a view of pleasing these gods The magical practices were mixed with religious rites to win the saving grace of mighty gods.

Q. 3 Describe the main features of the civilization of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. (P U 1938, 1952).

Ans. At about 3000 B. C there lived a cultural and civilised nation on both the sides of the river Indus. From the relics of the ancient cities which were buried deep at Harappa in the western Punjab and at Mohenjodaro in Sind, historians have come to the conclusion that the people who built such cities must be highly civilized In history they are called " Indus (Sindhu) Valley People " and their civilization is known as "The Indus Valley Civilization " These recent archaeological excavations have brought to the surface the remains of the earlier civilization which was in existence in India nearly 5000 years ago. Sir John Marshall remarks about the Indus valley civilization " That the civilization hitherto revealed at these two places is not an incipient civilization, but one already age-old and stereotyped on Indian soil, with many millennia of human endeavour behind it " He further recognises India along with Mesopotamia, Persia and Egypt as places where " the civilizing process were initiated and developed. This civilization was an urbane culture and belonged to chalcolithic period."

Excavations at Mohaenjodaro in the Larkhana district of Sind and at Harappa in the Montegomery district of Punjab lasted for ten years They have unearthed a series of cities one above the other. The layout of the city indicates a definite scheme of town planning enforced by a civic administration. The buildings were built from the burnt red bricks. Effective and hygienic arrangements were made for the disposal of waste product

and dirty water The entire system of drainage was in a highly perfected stage The Great Bath which covered an area of 1140 sq ft and provided facilities for hot air bath, was a remarkable structure

People of these ancient cities were mainly agriculture, and also developed trade and commerce. They traded with the people of Egypt, Persia and Mesopotamia. Skeletal remains show the cosmopolitan character of the population with the majority of Dravidians

Indus Valley people used gold, silver, copper, tin and lead; but did not know iron Precious stones, gold, silver and copper were used for making ornaments Fine craftsmanship is witnessed in their work. Numerous spindle whirls have been found; these finds reveal that they knew the art of making cloth from cotton as well as wool

They used several weapons such as axes, daggers, spears, bows and slings. Neither any defensive equipment nor sword was used by these people

There were many varieties of clay toys such as idols and images of beasts, men, and carts, the last one indicates the use of wheeled vehicles. (1) The number and variety of toys reveal that the Indus Valley people had good affection for their children. In other words, they had a well developed and healthy family life. The separate apartments of the houses also support this view. The joint family was the common feature of all early civilizations. Numerous articles of furniture and comfort speak eloquently of their prosperous, tasteful and luxurious life. Pottery was of smooth surface and at times

was decorated and even glazed Many seals bearing the inscription as well as the images of animals such as buffaloes, bulls and unicorns show highly developed skill of engraving which the Indus Valley people possessed Art of sculpture was also in developed stage. (2) In fact, the seals of the Indus Valley are of great importance They tell us everything about the art, religion, social life, education and occupation of the Indus valley people Two small figures of dancing girls are discovered They indicate that fine arts of music, dancing, painting and sculpture were greatly developed by them

Like other civilized community, these people domesticated animals like cow, bull, buffaloe, sheep, elephant, camel, goat, wolf, pig and dog, yet the place of pride was given to the bull It seems horse was not known to them Their diet consisted of wheat, barley, milk, fruits, meat and fish

The inscriptions of the seals indicate that they knew the art of writing which consisted of pictures, known as a pictographic script where a picture stands for a word

From the seals, it is known that they were the devotees of Shiva and Mother Goddess The cult of mother goddess was popular in the other civilization of the period also A male figure seated in the Yogic posture and surrounded by animals is identified as Shiva who is described as Mahayogin and Pashupati Stone pieces resembling Shivalingam are also found. People were also worshipping the tree, the river, the snake and the fish. The fish was the connecting link between all the early civi-

zations The burial and cremation of the dead bodies were in vogue.

In the making of the Indus Valley civilization four distinct types of races seem to have contributed they are, namely, Proto-Australoid, Mediterranian, Mongolian and Alpine. The Dravidians, however, were the authors of this civilization This civilization is as old as that of Elam or of Mesopotamia. This inference is based on many common trends which have been discovered in these earliest civilization

Q. 4 Discuss the historical problems raised by the discovery of the Indus civilization See Q No 3

Among other problems, the following important ones may be noted :

(a) The problem of date

(b) The problem of authors

(c) The extent and relation of the Indus Valley civilization with other civilizations

(d) The problem of its ruin and

(e) The Influence of the Indus Valley on the later civilization of India.

Q. 5 The discovery of Mohenjodaro has been called the greatest since the advent of the British India. Discuss this statement giving instance from the archaeological finds revealing the cultural activities of people of the Indus Valley (Important)

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CHAPTER III

VEDIC INDIA

Q. 1 Who were the Dravidians? Give an account of Dravidian civilization In what respects did the civilization differ from the Aryan civilization?

Ans. When Aryans invaded India they faced greater resistance from the natives of India, the Dravidians who might have descended from the people of Indus Valley civilization

Unlike the Aryans, the Dravidians had dark skin, flat nose, and short structure They had developed their own culture and religion which consisted in the worship of the phallus God-the God of Procreation. Like the people of Indus valley civilization, they also worshipped Shiva and Shakti.

Utensils and implements of copper and bronze are found from their tombs, they possess exquisite beauty of form and shape Besides the Dravidians knew the use of iron, gold and silver. Dyeing and weaving of cotton was known to them They lived in small villages and constructed small towns and forts which were later known as 'Pura' and 'Durga' respectively They irrigated their fields with river water and also built small ships Their trade consisted of pearls, gold, pepper, and cotton goods They had a developed literature and knew mathematics, and astronomy The Tamil literature of the earliest period gives us some information about their civilizatian

Unlike the Aryans, their society was matriarchal and no caste system Dravidian civilization was influenced, and in its turn influenced, the Aryan civilization. Some Dravidian social customs and forms of worship were taken over by the Aryans Owing to the complete political victory of the Aryans over Northern India, some Dravidians were forced to migrate to the South where they continued to develop their literature and way of living uninterrupted Others who offered resistance to the invading hordes had at last to surrender to the disciplined and mighty strength of the Indo-Aryans They were absorbed in the Aryan Society but were given inferior social status They were treated as slaves and called Dasyus or Dasas.

Q 2 Who were the Aryans? Whence did they come and why? What is the source of their history? What were their early settlements?

The questions of the original home of the Aryans and the probable date of their arrival in India have been he subject of an age-long discussion There is a wide ference among the views of the scholars about these controversial topics Some scholars believe India to be the home of Aryans while others assign places like circumpolar regions and the shores of the Baltic sea as their original birth places

Central Asia is given the title of the "cradle of the world" and is considered to be the home of the Aryans who migrated at different places of Asia and Europe This contention is substantiated by the following data Language and philosophy throw much light on

this vexed problem There are many words in greek,Latin, Sanskrit, Russian, Persian, English and German which show surprising similarities, for example words like 'Father' and 'Mother' in English have their equivalents 'Pitru' and 'Matru' in Sanskrit 'Pidar' and 'madr' in Persian, and 'Vater' and 'Mutter' in German Besides such similarities there is also a great resemblance in the grammatical structure of these languages From these, it may be concluded that speakers of these languages must have had a common place in the remote past

Perhaps in the earlier stages of their civilization Aryans lived somewhere on the borderland between Asia and Europe The eastern of this people migrated to Asia along the north of Black Sea and through Caucasus they moved further in Asia Minor and Iran, and later on into Northern India There are the names of deities, like Varuna and Nasatya in "Boghaz-Koi" inscriptions found in Asia Minor The date of these inscriptions is about 1400 B C This is the earliest recorded reference about the date of the Aryan's presense in Asia Minor

But B G Tilak considers circumpolar region as the original home of the Indo Aryans from where they were supposed to have gone towards south and west for better conditions In his "Rigvedic India", A C Das attempts to prove that Sapta-Sindhu and valley of Kashmir as the home of Aryans Neither of the above two views have found acceptance by other eminent historians

Aryans invaded, and settled in North-west regions of India at about 2000 B C. They were strong and warlike; unlike the natives, they were handsome, fair

skinned and tall They had brought with them their wealth which consisted of horses, sheep, goats and cows They were people of settled habits and their main occupation was agriculture They lived in villages.

They overpowered the natives and called them Dasyus or the Anaryans

Vedas are the most reliable sources of the information about the early settlements of the Aryans in India These hymns often mention "Sapta Sindhavah", i e seven rivers–which indicates the land of the seven rivers inhabited by the Rigvedic Aryans

Q. 3. Describe social, economic, political and religious life of the early settlers

Ans The Aryan society was simple but well organised. They had large joint families, mainly patriarchal

The community was divided into four varnas, viz, Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras, this division was made functional and less hereditary Besides, the individual's life was divided into four stages, such as Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanprastha and Sanyastha. Thus the life of the individual as well as the community was well organised and planned meaningfully

Property was inherited by the male child The system of joint family was prevailing to such an extent that three to four generations lived under one man

Woman was the queen of her husband's home, but she had no property rights Her cooperation was indispensable for religious ceremony Monogamy was the rule and only princely classes were permitted to marry more

wives than one. Child marriage was not known and women exercised their choice in the selection of their partners to the extent of remaining spinster. Widow-remarriage was not objected but not popular too Women in this age moved freely in the society with less restrictions and more freedom They were highly educated, some of them composed Vedic verses

Obedience and filial love were expected from Aryan children The male head of the family was the supreme monarch managing his house which was almost as big as a small village

The Aryans were not strictly vegetarians. Their diet consisted of meat, cow-milk, vegetables and fruits. Some time they ate fish 'Soma' and 'Sura' were their favourite drinks Somas a sort of wine prepared from the Soma plant and was mainly used at the sacrifices Sura was plainly an intoxicating drink the use of which was not approved by the Vedic texts. They were fond of hunting, chariot-racing and such other manly games. Their favoured pastime was the game of dice

Early Aryans were divided among many tribes, internecine (mutually destructive) wars were common A verse in Rigveda refers to a war of ten kings The Aryans came in different tribes and at different periods Hence. they were fighting among themselves

During Vedic period Aryans lived mostly in Villages and their main occupation was agriculture Besides, they domesticated useful animals such as cow, bull, dog, sheep, goat, ox, swine and horse They knew spinning, weaving and tanning, besides making garments of furs, skins and

wool They also knew both the crafts of carpentry and dyeing

There were some towns which were the centres of various trades. The Aryans built ships and traded with other countries Barter system was the basis of internal trade and cow was generally used as a measure of value

The political machinery of the vedic civilization was highly developed, in it the tribe was the highest unit while the village was the lowest Tribe was a group of families following the patriarchal system This tribe was *governed by a chief or a king The position of a tribal* chief was generally elective and gradually became hereditary The king defended the people against foreign invaders and protected cattle-wealth of his people He was responsible for maintaining law and order during peace time In administration he was assisted by two popular bodies, namely, **samiti** and **sabha**; while the former was an assembly of people, the latter a council of selected people All the decisions were taken by these assemblies The king was just an Executive

The extreme lowest political unit was 'kula', i e, family governed by a male head of a joint family Several such families lived together in a 'Grama' i e a village They shared common properties like a cow-shed 'gotraj' because there was always a danger of the cattle-stealer The head of one of these families was elected as 'gramani' who enjoyed all the previleges of a village-headman Every grama turned itself into a fighting unit in times of war Many such gramas combined to form 'Vish' whose chief was called "Vishpati" These larger political units

formed a tribe whose head was called king or 'Rajan, and also 'Gopa' because he was the protector of the cows In return, he received gifts from his subjects and a share of booty in form of land, cattle and calves Sometime, the king acted as a judge

The Aryan religion was in the form of nature worship Rigvedic religion reveals the practical, utilitarian out-look on life. The hymns have definite purpose to serve. They worshipped nature Gods through hymns, the singing of which was accompanied by sacrifices The priest offered prayers; Ghee and 'Soma' juice were used in sacrifice. The aim behind these prayers was material happiness in the worldly life The priests were thought to be the agents of gods Priest occupied a very important place in the community Their gods were Indra, Vishnu, Varuna, Ashvina, Vayu and Agni representing the corresponding aspects of nature, thunder, Sun, Sky god, air and fire But this religion was for the upper classes. Poorer classes believed in rites, magic and sorcery Some verses in Rigveda, in the last mandala refer to one supreme being which later on became the Atman or Brahman of the Upanishads.

Some believe that the Aryans brought their worship of nature with them from their original home. However their moral standard was very high. Varuna was the protector of the moral order; he was supposed to maintain moral and cosmic order and to punish evil-doers.

Q. 4 Brief review of the state of Aryan Society as revealed in the Vedas, with special reference to the status of the king, the priests and the women and noblemen

See question No 11

Ans. For the appointment of the king, two different views have been expressed in Ather–veda and Yajur–veda According to the latter kingship was partly hereditary

According to Vedas, Brahmanas had a very important place in Vedic Society, but at the same time a Brahmana was not so indispensable as in the later age Priesthood was yet functional and not hereditary as in the latter age A Brahmana was known by his deeds and actions Even when Kingship was elective, Purohita played a very decisive role in determining the acceptance or rejection of the King He advised the King on all important matters of the state as well as on his personal and domestic problems In the absence of the King, the Purohita presided over the meetings of the Sabha Senani or the Military leader was another important officer of the King during this period

Q. 5 What were the philosophical beliefs and speculations of the Rigvedic Aryans ? (See question 11)

Ans Rigvedic religion expresses an out–look on life which was essentially this–worldly, it indicated the path of achieving material happiness in this life. It appears that Rigvedic people were less worried about the problems relating to life before birth and after death

The Rigvedic Aryans first buried their dead, but later on they creamated the dead with sacred fire, believing that the sacred fire will carry it to the domain of Yama where the departed persons may live in the company of their ancestors

Some of the Rigvedic hymns show an attempt to solve the riddle of the universe Formerly it was believed that the world was created by gods but Rigvedic Aryans speculated that the world was created by a creator who was superior to all gods They called the creator of this world Prajapati, Purusa, Vishvakarma or Hiranyagarbha.

The cosmogenic hymns distinguished "Sat" from "Asat" i e, existence from non-existence. In the "Song of the creation" it is said that there was nothing in the beginning but "One" The creation of this world owes itself to desire in that 'One.'

During Vedic time philosophical speculation and the theory of creation were intermingled this confusion was later removed by the Samkhya philosophy by explaining the creation of this word in terms of 'Purusha' and Prakrati, spirit and matter.

Q. 6. Give an account of Social and political and religious conditions of the Later Vedic Period.

Ans Historians find it difficult to demarcate two successive periods in the history of mankind and hence it is difficult to date the beginning of the Later Vedic Period and also to determine its duration. However, it is assumed that Rigvedic Period lasted upto 1200 B. C The period beginning from 1200 B. C. and lasting upto 600 B C is said to be the Later Vedic Period

During the later Vedic period, the social life underwent many far-reaching changes. The Varna system of the Rigvedic period took definite shape and order and became more crystalized and less flexible. The need

for more consolidated and co-ordinated social order was felt for two reasons to stabilise the aryan progress of civilization, and to facilitate the admission of the non-Aryans in the Aryan fold The four varnas were four groups in society Brahmanas were scholars, teachers, philosophers, scientists and priests They lived in the jungles and were devoted to religion and philosophy. The Kshatriyas were the rulers, administrators, soldiers and thus concerned themselves with the political life They were the protectors of Kshatra or Law The Vaishyas were the producers They followed agriculture, commerce, trades and crafts Kshatriyas and Vaishyas were the bulk of society and the Brahmanas were few in number They were poor but most respected for their moral character and intellectual leadership The Kshatriyas and Vaishyas gave the Brahmanas several facilities and privileges so that they could pursue their studies in peace. The Sudras served the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas The equality of all the individuals was maintained by assigning three common religious duties to all the four varnas They were Learning (Adhyayana), Sacrifice (Yagna) and Charity (Dana) The Brahmana had three more compulsory duties Teaching, helping in the performance of the sacrifice and acceptance of Charity The Varna system was an order of society based on duty and succeeded greatly because of the duty-conscious individuals The term "Varna" is loosely translated as caste As Dr Basham points out, Varna never meant and does not mean caste but an order The caste-system (Jati) is a later development based on sub-divisions of the Varnas It is vital to remember that the

varna system and caste-system were designed to promote social harmony They remained as hormonious groups till recently Only recently political and economic interests and the wrong interpretations of this system created rivalry and jealousy, between these groups Some historians, mostly westerners who could not understand the spirit of the Varna system thought it to be a division of society into four rival groups It is completely wrong The four varnas lived in complete harmony and co-operation. This view is supported by the enormous progress reached by the ancient Hindus in material progress, philosophical speculations, religious and social stability and finally their influence on all ancient civilizations A Society if it were divided could not achieve so much progress At the same time, it should be noted that ancient Hindus developed all aspects of life simultaneously, not only religion or philosophy

The air of life was Purushartha, a four-fold principle of Dharma (justice), Artha (material prosperity), Kama (Satisfaction of emotional needs) and Moksha (Salvation). Thus individudal personaliry must be fully developed Moksha means the complete identification of the individual with the Universe It is to be found here in this world It is salvation from the individual bonds and his dedication to social service To train the individual to achieve these Ideals, four ashramas or stages of life were created

As the life of the Society was well ordered and planned, so was the life of the individual Discipline, order and planning are the key-notes af the later Vedic

society the life of the individual was divided into well-planned four stages, Brahmacharya or the student's life, Grihastha Jivan or the life of the house-holder, Vanaprastha or the retired life and Sanyasa-renunciation. In each stage of the life, the man had well-defined duties and responsibilities appropriate to his age. Even the smallest details of the life of the individual from birth to death were prescribed in the scriptures During the first ashrama of Brahmacharya, the individual must be devoted to learning and discipline. After completing the elementary education in the family, the Brahmachari or the student goes to the Gurukula or the hermitage to study under the rishi. There he studies the Vedas, philosophy, religion, Dharmashastrrs or the laws of society and the sciences. He returns to the village, gets married and starts the second ashrama of Grihastha. This is certainly the most important one. The individual participates in the family occupation, earns wealth, takes part in civic and social affairs and thus contributes his best to the social welfare. All along he must be detached from the family and property which he must regard as trust, At the age of fifty, he must enter the third ashrama of Vanaprastha, by retiring from active life. He must live outside the village and help the society by giving his advice. Finally, at the age of seventy five, the individual renounces the idea of Self (I and mine) and completely dedicates himself to the cause of social welfare and Truth. This is known as Sanyas It does not mean running away from society and the world, as it is wrongly understood by many. A Sanyasi must wander from village to village preaching, teaching and

serving the society The fourth order was the most respected one and helped to keep the society on the path of justice (Dharma)

The Varna and Ashrama systems helped the Society to remain in tact in spite of severe political changes. All the magnificient civilization became possible only because the society was well-planned and well-ordered The individual led a life which was an enlightened and disciplined one. Duty was emphasised and therefore there was progress Rites nnd sacrifices were performed at the various stages of life-such as Garbhasthana, Jatakarma, Upanayana, Vivaha and Shraddha

Woman lost freedom of selection of her life-partner Besides, marriage was made obligatory and the birth of the male child considered indispensable for religious and social reasons There were different forms of marriage, but whatever the form, marriage was considered to be sacred

Little change is noticed in the forms of Government and in the manner of administration over those obtained in the Rigvedic Period Since the natives were either destroyed or subjugated, the Aryan princes began to consolidate their power and extend it as far as possible The desire for supremacy and imperial power was the ruling passion among the tribal kings Horse-sacrifices were performed to realise their goal of imperial dignity. Kingship was hereditary and with the emergence of larger political units-partly owing to merger and partly owing to conquests-the powers of the king increased He was assisted and aided by the Purohita, the Senani,

the Gramani, the Kshatri and other officers The Sabha and Samiti also gained in importance They are described as the twin daughters of Prajapati (Creator) This suggests their important position in the social and political life of the eriod as well as the equal status of both the houses

Of the important political clans of the time were those of the Purus, the Kurus, the Kosalas and the Videhas. The war of Kurukshetra was fought between the purus and Kurus, This war is immortalized in the epic of the Mahabharata composed by Vyas

Q 7 Give the salient features of the Brahmanical religion.

Ans The religious literature of the Later Vedic Period consisted mainly of the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads, besides the Vedavyas, the Upavedas and the Sutras The above mentioned literature reflects three different religious trends of the contemporary life From the beginning of Brahmanical period to its end Religion consisted in offering oblations and sacrifices various gods to win their favour In revolt against .is Brahmin-dominated religion, two distinct religious ends emerged, the aim of one was to speculate the relation between man and the universe and hence this religious thought current is called rationalistic. The ideal of the third form of religion was an ascetic life. But the most popular form of religion was ritualistic and full of ceremonies and sacrifices

During Vedic Period, the Aryan religion had a materialistic outlook and they were unconcerned and

indifferent about the life after death In the Brahmanical, the aspirations for better life were extended to life after death It is difficult to explain this change in the temper of the people, but it may be surmised that Brahmans largely contributed to this change in outlook on life

The Rigvedic priests always accompanied the king as his advisers and counsellors On behalf of the king, they offered sacrifices to various gods to ensure king's victory on the battlefield, and peace and prosperity in his kingdom Victories were attributed to the will of the gods whose favour was invoked with the help of the Brahmans–the representatives of the gods on this earth Thus the priests wielded immense influence on the king and his affairs, the wrath of the priest was believed to be visited with ruination and misery on his victims.

Some of the priests received rich gifts from the princes in the shape of cattle, land and other precious things Besides this, they exacted small and big payments from the house–holders in return for rites and sacrifices which they performed for their benefits The performance of these sacrifices was obligatory and the presence of the priests became inevitable Later on, these exations and highly unpopular. People began to lose faith in them

The impact of non–Aryan religion on the religion of the Brahmanical Age was considerable. Though the priests began to Aryanise the native tribes and races they had conquered, yet the non–Aryans did not give up their belief and gods, with the result that the Aryan priests

modified their own religion of the Brahmanical period reflects the religious outlook of two divergent races The non-Aryan form of worship, such as Shiva-worship was very popular among the lower strata of society who found little to enthuse in the complicated rituals of the Brahmanical priests The god Shiva is a mystic god of procreation and animals represented by phallus Later on, the priests identified the Shiva of the non-Aryans with the minor Rigvedic god Rudra The lowest forms of religion consisted of witch-craft, sorcery, superstitions and beliefs in ghosts, good and evil spirits which were believed to be pacified by rites, offering and oblations

Dissatisfied with rites and rituals, the intelligent section of the society gave up the wordly life to live a life of simplicity and contemplation The speculations and contemplation of such people sought to know the significance of human life and its relation with the universe are embodied in the pages of the Aranyakas and the Upanishads.

Q. 8 What do you know about the growth of the ıe-system in Hindu-Society ? Discuss its merits ıd demerits

The Verna is the oldest social institution of India It first appeared in the Later Vedic period of Indian history Varna system means division of the community according to some principle, in the Rigvedic period, the principle behind the division of society was mainly functional and occupational Society was divided into three broad groups and each group was expected to do one specialized work. For example, Kshatriyas defended

the tribe and its wealth from the attack of the enemies and thus professionally they became expert soldiers Brahamanas did all work which required intelligence, the composed prayers to appease the elemental gods Vaishyas or the merchant class looked after the primary needs of the society, this class was composed of agriculturists, traders and the artisans The fourth and the last class was called 'Sudra ' They did the rest of the work–the lowest grade of work They were called Dasas.

In the beginning these divisions were not water–tight, there was appreciable mobility within these classes The profession which one followed decided to what class he should belong, later on, just the reverse happened and caste divisions became hereditary But in Rigvedic period, caste–system was elastic and a person could change his caste by changing his profession As a matter of fact, each individual was at birth a Sudra and only after investure he became a 'Dvij ' Even a 'Chandal' was able to became a Brahmana Vashistha and Vyasa were not Brahmanas by birth, yet they were respected as Brahmanas In short, caste system was yet flexible and merely functional.

During the Brahmanical period, caste–system took a more definite shape and became more rigid and less elastic Each caste was bound by diet and rules of marriage Inter–caste marriages were prohibited, but some latitude was given to the male members of higher caste. A male member of higher caste was allowed to marry a woman of lower caste except that of Sudra But a man of lower caste not allowed to marry a woman of higher caste Thus a Brahmana could marry a woman

of either the Kshatriya caste or Vaishya caste, and a Kshatriya could marry neither a Kshatriya woman nor a Brahmana woman When a mail marries in a lower caste, the union is called 'Anuloma' marriage, and the union is called 'Pratiloma' when the mail marries in a higher caste In spite of social apathy and hindrance to Pratiloma marriages, such marriages were not uncommon, with the result that the children of such parents were social out–caste and formed another caste which sooner or later turned itself into an immobile and inelastic group Consequently, these new experiments rather intensified the rigidity of caste–system than relaxed it Thus Hindu society was turning itself into a net work of caste and sub–castes

Besides this, foreigners like Hunas and Gurjaras, who invaded India were absorbed in the Aryan fold, but they retained their distinction by forming their own castes, Gurjars became Gujjars and the Hunas were known as Hoons of the Hindu Society Also, religious movements affected the caste structure in this way, within Hindu society, we have Kabir Panthis, Lingayats, Jains and Buddhists Finally owing to the invasion of the Musalmans, the caste system became more fortified to defend itself against the vigorous approaches of the Muslim culture As no synthesis between Hindu culture and Muslim culture was possible, the caste system was forced to be very sensitive to any outside influence, and ultimately became a fossilised institution for want of dynamism and mobility from within and without And unlike the non–Aryans or the Dasyus, the Mohamedans came to India as conquerors and would not like to

accept a lower social status in the hierarchy of the Aryan social structure

Many theories have been propounded to explain the origin of caste system In the beginning the basis of classification of people into castes was mainly economic namely, the division of labour People following the same occupation formed also a social group, the question of social superiority within the community life did not arise till the non–Aryans were admitted in the Aryan fold Being a defeated race and otherwise superior to the Aryans in many respects, the non–Aryans were classed as socially inferior

The other theory traces the origin of caste system is divinity, the caste–system was said to have a divine sanction It is said to have come from the various limbs of the primeval being highest i e Brahmans came from its head, while Sudras the lowest from its feet Also, in the Bhagavadgita, Lord Krishna has said that he had created four castes on the basis of inherent capacities and functions i e 'guna' and 'karma'

But in the last analysis, the difference of colour seems to have played an important part in the formation of the caste system The white Aryans felt a sense of race superiority and purity of blood when they came in contact with the black natives of India This is the view forwarded by Professor Rapson who interprets 'Varna' as social distinction based on colour

Whatever may be the origin of caste, there are nearly 3000 sub–castes in India according to the investigations of V A Smith He further says that to day a

a caste means a "group of families internally united by peculiar rules for the observation of ceremonial purity especially in matters of diet and marriage" To-day caste-system is breaking under the impact of western culture and economic forces, but it has lost neither its appeal nor its force In every walk of life, the individual feels greater loyalty to his caste, and his decisions are influenced by the fact of his membership of certain social group Unless the economic and cultural level of mass of men is raised, caste distinctions will sway over the entire Hindu society

Every social institution has its utility when it is rooted in contemporary needs. "The great merit of caste is that it has enabled Hinduism to expand its ranks and and at the same time to preserve intact its spirit and its teaching through ages of conflict and confusion It took an organic view of society and no tribe, however low in culture, was believed to deserve obliteration in the living organism of society" (Veda Vyasa Ancient India)

The caste system was indeed a remarkable means of achieving cultural synthesis The non-Aryans or the natives of India as well as the subsequent invading tribes found a place in the social structure without surrendering its way of life

Since the basis of the caste-system was economic, the economic gains which flew from this organization of society were immense, the skill and craftmanship were localized in certain castes which passed this heritage to the next and growing generation Thus the son of a carpenter became a skilled carpenter

The caste-system preserved the Hindu culture from the onroads of foreign cultures, in this way, it acted as a great stabilizing force There were many foreign invasions into India but Hindu society has remained intact, thanks to the caste-system

But when a social institution outlives its utility, it hampers the progress of the country in which it has found its roots, caste-system is such an institution To-day divided India is a house divided against itself The division of India into hundreds of water-tight and exclusive social groups is due to the caste-system The loyalty to the caste hampers the growth of loyalty to the nation, to the people In short, caste has been an impediment to the progress and development of India Besides, caste-prejudices failed to inspire people to combine and co-operate in times of national emergency The defeat of India on many occasions can be explained partly in this way.

Since caste-system embodies within itself the organic view of society, it has no place for the individual and his freedom Besides, to-day it has become an engine of oppression and mutilates the spirit of democracy. Large sections of Indian people are condemned to live the life of social out-caste Since its existence depended upon age-old traditions it became the pronounced enemy of any desirable change or mobility To-day its advocates are the enemies of people and their freedom to move and live a life of their liking In short, whatever the merits Manu might have seen in this otherwise wonderful social grouping, to-day it stands for conservatism, reaction and negation of freedom

Q. 9 Write a critical note on the Vedic literature

Ans. Vedic period was a period of great literary and creative activities The geographical location of northern India with its rich scenic background inspired the Aryan invaders to finest flight of imagination and rapture No wonder that the Vedas–the literary contribution of the early Aryans are a store-house of religious and philosophical thoughts

Originally, there were three Trayi vidya, namely, the Rigveda, the Samveda and the Yajurveda During this period and later on, other literature dealing with rituals, ceremonies, and popular beliefs was composed and appended to the three vedas with the result that a large mass of theological beliefs, philosophical speculations and forms of rites and rituals passed under the title of the Vedas Of course, all the literature that was added afterwards was distinguished from the vedas– a collection of hymns in verse–in the following manner Vedas by themselves were considered to be revealed knowledge to the Rishis by the good, they were also called Samhitas, while the literature mostly in prose–which was later on added was called 'Smriti' which means knowledge remembered as against revealed

Athervaveda is believed to be composed later on, it deals with spells, charms and incantation to be used at the time of sorcery and witchcraft. Perhaps this literature came in existence to meet the needs of the lowest class of people In short, all the vedic literature give a graphic picture of contemporary life in all its aspects, religious, social, economic and literary

The vedic literature is divided into seven parts

(i) The Samhitas or the main texts of the four vedas,
(ii) The Brahmanas,
(iii) The Aranyakas,
(iv) The Upanishads,
(v) Sutra literature,
(vi) Vedangas and Upavedas,
(vii) The Darshanas

Also, the vedic literature is classified in two divisions, Shruti and Smriti. The former means revealed knowledge and the latter, traditional learning The four main vedas are called Shruti, while the remaining literatute is called Smriti.

The Vedas . (The Samhitas, Shruti) These Vedas contain hymns, prayers, sacrificial formulas and spells in verse and at times in prose They were the sacred books of Indo-Aryans The vedas are to the Hindus, what the Bible and the Quoran are to Christians and Mohemedans respectively Cultural traditions of the Hindus are traced to these oldest literary monuments

Of the four vedas, Rigveda seems to be the earliest composition and thus reflects the contemporary life. It contains 1028 hymns and more than 10,000 verses Hymns are composed in metres and generally addressed to Indra, Agni, Varuna and the other Aryan gods It also reveals the customs, and beliefs of the early Aryans. Some hymns are of speculative nature, These speculations are elaborated and further developed in Upanishads Formerly these hymns were handed over orally to pupils by the teachers

Some of the hymns of the Samvedas are selected from Rigvedas and set to music for soma sacrifices It gives us information about early Aryan music, and sacrifices and ceremonies which were popular among them

Yajurveda (Samhita) contains the formulas for sacrifices It has also borrowed from the Rigveda "It is a store-house of information about the early Aryan philosophy and religion. It is in two parts, Shukla (white)and Krishna (Black) It also contains information about the ancient Indian geography and about the life of the early Aryan settlers In short, it is considered to be an historical document of the age

Athervaveda Some of the hymes of Rigveda are embodied in this veda It contains a large body of formulae which resulted in disease, calamities and miseries These formulas aimed to invoke the help of divine powers to fight against forces animical to man and his property. To gain health, prosperity and peace of mind, one had to take recourse to the Athervaveda It also deals with hilosophical doctrine and detailed description of rites and ceremonies

Brahmans The Brahmans are in general comentaries on Vedas It is a critical exposition of the text of each veda and is appended to the Veda itself. The texts of the first three Vedas indicate the creative and imaginative mood and temper of the people, while Brahmanas seem to be written to establish some kind of order and discipline in thinking as well as in day-to-day living Composed in prose by the philosophers they elucidate and explain the hidden meaning of the text of the vedas Also, the

rishis who wrote these voluminous treatises prescribed detailed and expensive rituals to solve all the problems of this world as well as of the life after death. Thus, living constituted merely in the performance of a series of neverending rituals and ceremonies beginning from birth to death In this maze of complicated methods of saving the soul of man, the soul of man was completely lost sight of

Each Veda has its own Brahmanas The Rigveda has two, the Aitareya and the Kaushitaki, the Samveda has three, the Tandya, Sadavinsa, the Mantra and Chhandoga the Yajurveda has two, Taittiriya and Shatapatha, and the Athervaveda has its Gopatha Brahmana

Aranyakas The aim behind the composition of Brahmanas was to regulate the course of human life on this earth thus rites and sacrifices were prescribed to be performed by the Grihastha or the house-holders, while Aranyakas which were appended to Brahmanas were for the forest dwellers They contain the germs of religious speculations which were later developed and further elaborated in the Upanishads The Samveda and the Atherveda have no Aranyakas

Upanishads The entire vedic literature was not composed in one or two generations, it is the work of series of generations, It is the work of series of generations Every generation had its own interpretation of the main texts of the vedas and these interpretations were appended to the already existing literature on the main texts of the vedas Thus in the entire vedic literature we can glean a continuity of a thought process While

the Brahmans laid greater emphasis on rituals and ceremonies, the Aranyakas indicated the other aspect of the Aryan religion e. g the philosophical or the rational aspect

Among all the literature composed in the vedic period, the Upnishads have greater value to the modern student of philosophy. They developed a social cult of vedantic philosophy. They are a culmination of the best and loftiest thought that was in the vedic age Indian philosophy is nothing but an elucidation of Upnishads They deal with the problems and riddles of the universe, life, death, God and soul

The main idea of the Upanishadic philosophy is that only Atma exists, the existence of the rest is an illusion Everything is Atma (the world soul) and Atma is everything Individual soul (Brahma–Atma) is no separate reality. thus the individual soul is identified with the world soul "Tat tvam asi" "that thou art" sums up the metaphysical doctrine of the Upnishadic philosophy

Sutra Literature Sutras deal with customary law ritual, they are known for their brevity of expression nce brevity more often than not conceals the meaning Commentaries on Sutras became necessary This service was rendered by the Scholars and in this way they became indispensable to the society Sutras deal with ceremonies, how to perform them and when to perform them To liberate the human soul from the cycle of birth, various ceremonies were introduced. The Sutras are classified as (i) Grihya, (ii) Dharma and (iii) Shrauta The first two are important to the student of history and sociology since they inform him about the social and religious life of the contemporary life

Vedangas they help in the understanding of the texts of vedas and consist of (i) Siksha i e h onetics, (ii) Chhandas i e Metre; (iii) Vyakarana i e Grammar, (iv) Nirukta i. e Etymology, (v) Jyotish i e Astronomy (vi) Kalpa i e religious practices

Since learning and teaching were both oral, skill in metre and understanding of grammar were indispensable Vedangas i e the parts of vedas helped in the understanding and transmission of vedic lore to the coming generations

The Upavedas Besides the literary work dealing with philosophy and religion, there were some works on the secular topics such as medicine, archery, music, art and architecture, namely, Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Ghandharva veda and Shilpa veda

Q 10 Describe the educational system that was in vogue in the Later Vedic Age.

The educational system of any country is affected and shaped by two factors, the geographicial conditions of the country and the size of the social organization The early Aryans inhabited the region lying between the river Indus and the Ganga, the Himalayas were overlooking this region Besides, the unit of Social organization was small and simple While the contents of education centred round worship of nature, the development and growth of the individual was the ultimate goal and the ideal of the then existing educational system

The student had to go to his teacher at a very early age and where his studies lasted for about twelve years

A student must serve his teacher and consider him his spiritual father. He was expected to live a simple and austere life and take a vow of complete celibacy. His morning session started as early as 4-30 A.M. when after taking cold bath, he had to recite vedic hymns and other prayers. Besides, learning vedic hymns by heart, he was expected to learn from his Guru the following subjects: the art of composing the hymns, legendary history, non-vedic ballads called 'gathas', geometry, astrology and astronomy. Religion saturated the education, and literature was written about the various sacrifices which figured prominently in the contemporary religion.

The life of a Brahmana was divided into four stages. In the first stage-In the stage of a Brahmachari-he received formal schooling at the house of Guru, of course, the content of the schooling was very practical and prepared the student to face the realities of life which he was ordained to live as a Grihastha. As a Grihastha he applied his learning to practical situation and acquired further knowledge about life and its manifold problems. When he had lived full life, he retired in the forest and in his turn imparted instruction to the future generation. Finally, he leaves the worldly life and attains moksha by studying and practising philosophy. In short, life of the man was divided into well-planned four stages and to live an orderly life, the child was given appropriate education at the house of his Guru. Needless to mention that learning was not separate from life, as to-day.

In short, goal of education in the Later Vedic period was four-fold 'Dharma' (Justice), Artha (wealth), 'Karma'

(Desire) and 'Moksha' (Salvation) All these four aspects of human life were woven in the educational systems of the Gurukula system

Q 11 Describe briefly the six systems of Indian Philosophy

Ans It is difficult to decide the authorship of any system The authorship is attributed to a person who compiled the ideas and the methods of self-realization which were lying scattered in the vast vedic literature. These six systems are known as six Darshanas or six systems of philosophy

(1) The Nyaya System of Gautama
(2) The Veisheshika System of Kanad
(3) The Sankhya System of Kapila
(4) The Yoga system of Patanjali
(5) The Purva Mimamsa by Jaimini
(6) The Uttar Mimamsa by Badarayana
This is also known as Vedanta

The Nyaya System

The Nyaya and Veisheshika Systems have many points in common, both systems accept atoms as the ultimate substance of the entire universe, also both of them deal with the strict and accurate classification of ideas and experiences

The Nyaya System is a system of Indian formal logic, it treats in details the problems of formal logic; namely, fallacies and inferences, while Nyaya System is a treatise on formal or deductive logic, the Veisheshika System deals with inductive logic, both the systems, thus, are complementary to each other.

The Veisheshika System derives its name from 'vishesh' which means particular as against general or universal It has propounded that the atom is the ultimate irreducible reality

The Sankhya System

The Sankhya System is an expression of revolt against the monistic theory of early Upanishads It claims to be rational and scientific There are scientific and analytical discussions about the human mind It is a well-co-ordinated, systematized, logical and thought-provoking system Unfortunately, its heritage has been cast to the winds in the later ages and little has been done to develop the main thesis of the Sankhya philosophy It presents a bold endeavour in an age of faith in the Almighty God as a creator, to explain the origin and evolution of man and the universe without positing the existence of any supernatural agency like God Its influence on the later philosophy is considerable but not so much as one would wish

Unlike the atom theory of Nyaya and Veisheshika, the Sankhya System accepts dualism as the starting point as a basis, these two elemental and irreducible ultimate entities are Purusha and Prakriti or mind and matter They have no beginning and no end, they are eternal Matter is inert, and lifeless, mind or soul gives this matter a direction and purpose Though it assumes that matter is endowed with qualities which make evolution by itself possible, somehow, Purusha or the individual soul is entrapped in the Prakriti and that sets the ball of complex living rolling

Liberation consists in freeing the soul from the clutches of matter But in the last analysis, the course of one's living is determined by the news of Karma-past and present. The singular feature of this system is that it does not acknowledge gods of any variety and hence, it does not prescribe methods to please gods which do not exist

The Yoga System

Yoga means concentration of mind on any object mostly God or eternity Yoga System accepts the doctrines of the duality of Prakrit and Purusha of the Sankhya system But while Sankhya System has discarded God, Yoga System accepts Him as a helper to the Sakhaka the follower of the Yoga System

The Yoga System throws flood of light on the development of the science of psychology It deals with instincts, emotions, and the inclinations and other manifestations of mind The human mind was an object of study for the follower of Yoga System The study of the human mind is a preliminary condition for the preparation of the same to receive the higher knowledge For self-realization, purification of mind and body is essential To achieve this goal, the Yoga System gives eight steps They are Yama, Niyama, Asan, Pranayama, Dharma, Dhayan, and Samadhi These steps aim to inculcate the spirit of Asceticism and other virtues such as non-violence, celebacy etc.

In a way, the Sankhya System and the Yoga System form good complements to each other Besides Sankhya Yoga, there are other Yogas such as Jnan Yoga, Bhakti

Yoga, Karma Yoga and Raj Yoga. Shri Aurobindo's Yoga is known as integral Yoga or Purna-Yoga which combines all other major Yogas.

The Purva Mimamsa · This system of Jaimini discusses rules and regulations for the performance of sacrifices

The Uttar Mimamsa . This system of Vyasa is also known as the Vedanta It is firmly rooted in Upanishads and its doctrine of Brahma as the universal soul Since Shankara has uplifted the Hindu religion, the Vedanta philosophy of the Uttar Mimamsa has become very popular and occupies a dominating position among other Indian philosophies

All the six systems were written in the style of Sutras which are known for their brevity of expression Sometimes, they are known as Sutra literature, though Sutras as such deal with rituals and ceremonies

Q. 12. Write a note on the Sutra literature

When the accumulated knowledge was passed on to the next generation through the word of mouth, the manner of expression acquired importance on its own right Brevity may or may not always be the soul of wit, but it certainly was the vehicle of ideas and experiences of the Vedic period Nothing gave so much delight to the composer as the saving of a word or even a vowel in his composition

Six Systems of early Indian philosophy or the Six Darshanas are written in compact and precise style Sutras prescribe the rules to be followed at the time of performing rites, ceremonies and sacrifices at the various

stages in one's life and also, they lay down the formulae to be used on such occasions The main Sutras are Saruta Sutra, Grihya Sutra and Dharma Sutra

Saruta Sutra deals with the rituals to be performed at the time of any public function or public yagnas Grihys Sutras were composed for the benefit of the house-holder in performing his duties The house-holder had to perform many rites and sacrifices at the various stages in his life Grihya Sutras laid down rituals Dharma Sutra laid down the duties of man, his duties depended upon to what Varna or caste he belonged The Dharma Sutras discuss the laws of social life such as those regulating marriage, inheritance, property, morality, income, punishment etc They are the most important of the Sutras and are still the basis of Hindu social organisation. Many great scholars like Manu, Yajnyavalkya, Narada and Vishnu wrote important commentaries on them.

CHAPTER IV

THE EPIC INDIA

Q 1 Write what you know about the Ramayana with special reference to the date of epics.

Ans. The Ramayana is an epic by Valmiki, a rishi of the Later Vedic age The author of this masterly epic was probably a contemporary of Ram, the events of whose life are superbly narrated in the epic The Ramayana gives also a picture of what an ideal king should be.

The Ramayana is also called "Adikavya" because of its literary merits as a classical composition This long narrative is a nice specimen of Sanskrit Kavya, the simplicity of its style is facinating and has made its translation in other languages easy and enjoyable as a work of great literary merit The structure of the language is quite different from that of the vedic literature Besides, unlike as in Mahabharata, there are a few igressive episodes appended to the main story of Rama he epic contains 48000 lines or 24000 shlokas

The Ramayana in its original form was taught orally by the author to the twin sons of Rama and Sita named Lava and Kusha It is said that Lava and Kusha made popular the epic by reciting the same at various courts and other popular assemblies

The story of the Ramayana has two main parts

(i) the intrigues at the court of Ayodya, and (ii) Rama's banishment from the kingdom of his father and his exploits in the South of India Both these parts are admirably woven by the poetic genius of Valmiki

Dasharatha, the king of Ayodhya, had three wives and four sons Rama was the eldest and was to succeed his father. On the day of his accession to the throne, Rama by a turn of fate was compelled to abdicate his right to the throne in favour of his younger brother Bharata Bharatha, born of Kaikeyi, refused to accept the crown won for him by her mother by exerting her influence over Dasharatha, but he consented to stay in Ayodhya to govern on behalf of his beloved brother Rama.

Rama was accompanied by his wife Sita and Laxmana, his brother Dasharatha died of grief

The second part commences with the journey of Rama towards south. The two brothers and Sita settled down on the bank of the river Godavri Once, when Rama and after him Laxman went far away in the hot chase of a beautiful deer, Ravana, the king of Lanka, abducted Sita. When both the Aryan princes returned, they had to recommence their journey in search of Sita On their way, many native clans promised their help to these princes and did help in defeating Ravana and reclaiming Sita. Hanuman, the chief of the native clan, played a decisive role in the crusade against Ravana.

When they returned to Ayodhya, there was another domestic crisis waiting for them The people of Ayodhya objected to the presence of Sita on the ground that she might be polluted during her stay in the kingdom of Ravana The ideal king and his wife should be above suspicion. Therefore, Sita accepted the popular verdict and went away to seek shelter in Valmiki's Here she delivered twin sons, Lava and Kusha

the epic which they heard from Valmiki When Rama came to hear this epic, he hurried to meet his wife who had already sought shelter in the interior of the mother Earth

The story indicates two things. The Aryan civilization spread to the farthest extreme of Sourh India during this period It leads us to believe that there existed friendship between the Aryan clans and the nature clans The Aryans for the first time were able to conquer the whole of South India but not without the assistance and help of the non–Aryans Sount India was believed to be a land inhabited by monsters and monkeys

Valmiki composed the Ramayana in Sanskrit In the 16 century A D Tulsidas composed a Hindi poem named "Ramacharit Manas" This poem was very popular as it was written in rhe popular language It has found its way in all the important languages of the world

The *Ramayana* gives a picture of an ideal joint family Greater emphasis is laid on one's duties than on one's ights We learn here about the contemporary conceptions about the ideal king, the ideal husband, the ideal wife, the ideal brother and the ideal servant

The most controversial incident in rhe Ramayana is about the banishment of Sita in defence to the wish of a washerman This is cited to illustrate that there was democracy in those days How far Rama was right in banishing a woman who followed him faithfully during his refuge in the forest is a moot point; but there are no two opinions about the place and position which a woman occupied in those days

The date of the epic is difficult to ascertain The two epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata do not belong to the same time or to any particular age The Mahabharata underwent many changes before it emerged in its final form about the earlier century of Christian Era The students of the ancient Indian culture should bear in mind that it is a problematic proposition to fix the date of the works of ancient India The date of the vedic literature is found out on the basis of internal and external evidences The eastern scholars are of the opinion that the Mahabharata was written 3000 years before Christ, while the western scholars assign 1000 B C as the possible date of composition The Ramayana in its first form is much older than the Mahabharata

The age in which the heroes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharat lived is called an epic age, the period between 1500 B C to 1000 B C is called an epic age since during this period the great epics are assumed to be composed It may be mentioned that the date of the Ramayana as well as the Mahabharat is a very controversial issue

Q 2 Write a note on the Mahabharata with a picture of society presented in it

Ans · The later Brahmanical period or epic age is a period between the war of the Mahabharata and the rise of Buddhism and Jainism During this period, there were activities of all kinds literary, religious and [illegible]phical The caste–system in its final shape, d[illegible] age, this age saw the birth of Upanishad

six systems of philosophy Besides, this age is known by its epics.-The Ramayana and the Mahabharata

The Mahabharata is a voluminous literary work containing 1,00,000 verses and is divided into eighteen chapters known as Parvas The Mahabharata represents a particular type of literature which is known either as Purana or the ancient stories, or Akhyan or Itihas i e. legends or history

The epic form of the poetical was not unfamiliar in vedic era Some ballads dealing with historical legends are found in the dialogue hymns of the Rigveda During the next stage i e, in the Brahminical period, ballads about a king or a warrior were composed in prose and verse, These ballads were sung during important public functions like Ashvamedha ceremony The two epics were composed in two neighbouring countries to sing the praises of the ancient dynasties of the kings

The first rudimentary form of the Mahabharat was a narrative balled known as Jaya It contained nearly 8800 stanzas and its author is supposed to be Vyas who might have witnessed the great Kuru war This original ballad was handed over to the next generation orally. Later on, this epic was renamed as 'Bharata' after the name of the clan 'Bharat' was composed by Vaishampayana a pupil of Vyas, it contained 24000 stanzas. 'Bharata' was again enlarged and recast after the fall of the Maurya Empire and during the time of the revival of of Brahmanism. The elaborated form was renamed 'Mahabharata ' In this number of new episodes which had no organic relation with the main thread of story,

were appended; the stories of Shakuntla, Savitri, Rama, Manu and the fish, Nala and Damayanti etc. which were all independent ballads were woven in the Mahabharata. Besides these additions, the philosophical and religious discourses, moral and ethical episodes and such other 'floating mass of literature' existing at that time was inserted in the great epic. In its final shape, it emerged as an encylopaedia of religion and Ethics (i e Dharma) and was rightly described as 'Shata Sahasri' Samhita The number of stanzas increased from 8800 to 1,00,000 stanzas.

The main theme of the Mahabharata is the war between Pandavas and Kurus of the Bharat clan and the defeat and downfall of the latter The Pandu King was enthroned as an emperor after he had performed the ceremony of 'Ashvamedha' The glory of Pandavas incited jealousy amongst the Kurus To deprive their glory, they were invited to play a gambling by Kurus. Since the invitation could not be rejected, the Pandus went to Hastinapur, the capital of the Kurus, played gambling and lost everything Ultimately they were banished from their own kingdom for twelve years After the twelve years' exile, Pandu family received help and shelter from the Matsya clan and others They were then prepared to wage war with the Kurus

Under the leadership of Krishna, the Pandavas fell upon the Kurus who were led by Duryodhana. The battle was fought for eighteen days on the Kurukshetra field The famous Bhagavad Gita is said to have been composed by Krishna to help Arjun to do his duty The effects of war were disastrous, Pandavas were victorious

The pictures of social life depicted in the Mahabharata do not belong to any particular period, however, the Mahabharata reflects the moral, political and religious aspects of the post-vedic period

There were many small tribal states during the famous Kuru-Pandava war, but all minor and major states opposing the Pandus were destroyed There was huge human carnage Yudhisthira was proclaimed as an emperor

There are various characters which embody in themselves the ideals of the contemporary life For filial love, duty and truth, there is the character of Bhishma The Pandavas give us the ideal of fraternal love Arjuna is a scholar and perfect soldier In Draupadi, we get the picture of an ideal wife, Krishna combines in himself learning, statesmanship and astute diplomacy

The worship of the trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (Shiva) was current at the time, besides, Ganesh and Parvati were becoming popular Gods

Cow-killing was common and sometime human sacrifice was practised The problem of population owing to its smallness was so actue that no moral scruples were raised against childless widow associating with the male member of the family to get a child Polygamy was no uncommon, Draupdi had five husbands who were all brothers The position of woman was very humiliating We note that even the royal queen like Draupadi was insulted in the court of princes, what would be the position of an ordinary woman in such a society To avenge the insult to Draupadi in the full-fledged court, Bhima resolved to drink the blood of a Kaurava prince and he fulfilled his resolution The borderline between savegery and the infant civilization might be very thin

There were three important bowers The king along with the other warriors defended the person and the property of the state, the merchants formed themselves into a guild and they enjoyed autonomy in their field, the affairs of the village were looked after by a village system (Gram Panchayat) which has persisted till to-day Brahmanas were not playing any important role in the state, they lived on alms, performed ceremonies and ran small schools

The Kingship was hereditary but people had the right to reject a certain prince if they found him deficient in qualities and virtues to be a fit king The king was assisted by his ministers Soldiers fought for their chief and considered it an honour to die on the battlfield The motto of the soldiers was 'The path to heaven lies in fighting' To meet the expenses of the state, the king levied taxes on the people

Q. 3. Write a short but critical note on the Puranas as the source of study of Hindu India

The Puranas are named as 'the fifth Veda of the popular Hinduism' and V. A Smith calls them undated history of India They are aptly described as 'popular sectarian compilations of mythology, philosophy, history and the sacred law intended as they are now used, for the instruction of the unsettled class.'

These puranas are eighteen in number and are correctly called historical since most of them deal with the old world legends Vishnu purana gives valuable information of the Maurya period and Mastya Purana [illegible] information about the Andhra Kings But myths

much intermingled in it that it is difficult to separate history from myth Thus their value is not only historical, they combined religion, mythology and tradition.

Since Puranas are said to be the history of man, they deal with primary creation, secondary creation, genealogies of gods and patriarchs, reigns, various Manus and lastly the history of ancient dynasties; in this way, they tell the story of the origin of the earth, relate the doctrines of the cosmic ages and gives the account of the Avatars of Lord Vishnu. Some puranas deal with the trinity of Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu

Thus, Puranas are a mixed fare, they deal with everything which might instruct, entertain and elevate the popular mind. In the form of stories–loose, incoherent and sometimes contradictory, primarily they aimed to morally instruct the populace and thus to inculcate the conceptions of right and wrong, virtue and vice.

Some of the important Puranas are Vayu Purana, Matsyakanda Purana and Brahma Purana Of course, it s difficult to fix the age of the composition of the uranas, as a matter of fact, they were composed at different times Some were composed in the vedic period. Vayu Purana is the most important and the oldest Purana According to Hunter and Wilson, the Vishnu Purana might have been composed in 1C45 B C.

Q, 4. Write short notes on . (1) Bhagavad Gita, (2) Manu's Dharma Shastra, (3) Ashta Dhyayi, (4) Bhagvata religion and Krishna, (5) Bhakti, Religion of Devotion

(1) Bhagavadgita

During the battle of Kurukshetra which is narrated in the Mahabharat, Arjuna refused to take active part

in human destruction Krishna, who was with Arjuna, persuaded him to perform his duty, and to carry conviction, he gave him sermons These sermons constitute Gita or Bhagavadgita Thus, Gita contains rational views about Sanyasa, Tyaga, Brahmacharya etc In it are reflected the various systems of philosophy like Sankhya and Yoga as well as the contemporary religious cults like Bhakti–Marga Bhagavadgita, in short, preaches dispassionate performance of one's duty, and the performance of one's Dharma selflessly is one of the ways to realise God

(2) Manu's Dharma Shastra

There are 2700 verses in simple yet classical style in Manu's Dharma Shastra. It is a work of literary merit and it is based on Dharma Sutra It was written after the caste–system had taken a definite shape and a cogent pattern and as such it represents the spirit of Hinduism of that time It concerns itself with the framing of rules and regulation for an orderly society and as such is the source and basis of the modern Hindu Law.

(3) Ashtadhyayi (Grammar) .

Panini lived in about 1000 B C and was a native of Peshawar district. By composing Ashta Dhayayi a grammar of Sanskrit–he richly deserves the title of one of the greatest grammarians of the world. His work eclipsed all the previous works on that subject Little modifications have been later added to his compendious and comprehensive work Panini surveyed and studied carefully with an eye of a grammarian
of material in Sanskrit language He

systematized in a very short space the grammatical rules and regulations with unique perfectness His rules of grammar, even to-day, need little modifications and changes

(4) Bhagavata religion and Krishna

Origin of the Bhagvata sect is not traceable The cult is woven around the Krishna Vasudeva who was considered as Supreme Body by Satvatas clan or Vrishni clan of Yadu tribe This religion was started among Kshatriya caste

The Vrishnis or the Satvatas of the Yadu tribe lived in Mathura of the Shrurasena Country They hailed and adopted Krishna Vasudeva, their hero, as God and started a cult of devotion and Bhakti The whole clan adopted the religion and later on, the new sect was recognised as Bhagvatas i e the devotees of Bhagvat (the Lord)

This Krishna Vasudeva appears to be the same person who played an important and decisive role in the battle of Kurukshetra He is referred to most devotedly and reverently in Mahabharata He is attributed the authorship of Gita He is the most popular god among Hindus and even today artists and poets find a source of inspiration in him He imbibed the mystical teaching of his teacher, Ghora Angiras, the sacred meaning of the sacrifice, according to Ghora Angiras, is the life of man himself and that the practice of virtues such as charity, non-violence, and austerity are more important than the performance of sacrifice Sun–the essence of life–is the worthiest object of one's thinking

These principles of sacrifice and the necessity of living a virtuous life, and the importance of knowledge reappear later on in the episode of the great epic, Mahabharata, namely, Bhagavata Gita whose authorship is atrributed to the same Krishna Vasudeva

The teaching of this new cult, i e Bhagavata Gita reminds us of the revolts of Buddhism and Jainism in a later age The cult of Gita refiects the dissatisfaction of the people with the Brahamanical religion which was infested with formalistic rituals and sacrifices But unlike Buddha and Mahavira, Krishna did not denounce the main tenets of the Brahmanical religion but merely reformed it by putting a new meaning in the term sacrifice

Krishna He was a historical person and a personality of his time In the war of Kurus and Pandavas, he played the part of an astute politician. He avenged the insult suffered by an Aryan woman Besides, he reformed the contemporary religion He imbibed in his life the mystical teaching of his teacher Ghora Angiras He preached a simple religion of attaining salvation through service without a selfish motive All his teachings are compressed in Bhagvata Gita

As times rolled on, Krishna became legendary, many myths and legends are interwoven around his name He became the supreme personified God purushottam (which literally means 'the best among men) but he is also worshipped as the perfect avatar of Vishnu

Stories depicting the early childhood of Krishna have survived till to-day and they are popular even to-day

throughout India During the 4th century B. C. Krishna worship widely practised Panini also refers to the devotees of Krishna At about the middle of 2nd century B C i. e. during the time of Patanjali, Krishna Vasudeva was identified with Narayana.

Megasthenes also referred to the devotees of Krishna. He called Krishna the Indian Hercules in the country of Shura Sena

(5) Bhakti, the religion of Devotion ·

The Bhakti–Marga the cult of devotion seems to have existed even during the days of the Iudus Valley civilization The Indus–Valley people seemed to have ollowed a devotional religion. They worshipped a iple of gods, namely, Shiva and Kali, Rigvedic God runa was offered devotional prayers In Upanishads, evotion to various gods such as the moon and the sun is given importance Near the end of the Brahmanical period Shiva and Vishnu were worshipped besides the minor deities

The cult of image–worship infiuenced even the atheistic religions of Buddha and Mahavira Later on, their images were also worshipped with rituals and ceremonies and prayers

CHAPTER V

BUDDHIST INDIA

Q. 1 What were the causes which led to the rise of new religious movements in the 6th century B C.?

Ans. During the sixth century B C the entire world experienced a mighty religious revolt against the traditional religion, its dogmas and its superstitions There was a spiritual awakening among the larger section of the people who heaved heavily under the ballast of religion This awakening culminated in the crusade against dogmatic beliefs and complicated rituals Zoraster in Iran and Confucious in China gave a new and living faith to the people of their respective countries India also witnessed two religious movements, initiated by the two Kshatriya princes of the Himalayan region.

In India, religion had become a vested interest in the hands of the priestly class. The Brahmanical religion consisted in the performances of rites, ceremonies and sacrifices These performances were both complicated and expensive. The economic burden of this complicated religion was so much as to arouse a suspicion for the need of such religion The tax of the religion affected all the classes of the community irrespective of their social status And when the demands of the religion became very excessive, a strong desire to dethrone the religion was born in all the sections of the community

Apart from the economic burden from which the people suffered, the Brahmanical religion failed to enthuse or inspire the people This failure of the old religion

can be explained by the fact that it laid excessive stress on the performances rather than of the performer, more stress was laid on the form than on the content of religion The contemporary religion did not ask for the active participation of the persons, there was no religious experience but only recitation of meaningless formula and passive observance of the sacrifices and rites as regards the people were concerned The result was a repugnance to the religion and its rituals. The demand for a new and living faith became imminent

In such a mood as described above which people would not like to witness the sacrifices of animals–nay, sometimes of even human beings When religion becomes indifferent to the sensitiveness of even average men and women, its fall cannot be far off, the same happened in the case of the Brahmanical religion The tyranny of the riestly class did not end with religion, they occupied dominant social position in the community life and enjoyed privileges which became irksome to the rest of the community Caste system, in its most inflexible and static form, was the creation of the priestly class who saw in it a sure instrument to preserve their privileged position in the society. Besides this social eminence which they enjoyed, they exerted great influence in the political matters of the country No prince could afford to displease a priest who possessed the divine powers to make or mar the prospects of any being It is not very surprising to know that leadership of these two religious movements came from the non–priestly class Both Mahavira and Gautama hailed from the Kshatriya i e the ruling class

Besides these economic, social and political factors, there was another important factor which paved the way for the emergence of a new religious movement and this philosophy or ideas developed by the previous generations Without an ideological background, no new faith can hope to catch the popular imagination The ideas developed in Aranyakas, Upanishadas and later on, in the six systems of Indian philosophy which culminated in the new faiths i e Buddhism and Jainism

Q 2 Briefly outline the life and teaching of Buddha

Ans Gautam Buddha is one of the greatest thinkers of the world, and is also the first dominant personality of the Indian history. We have an authentic and intimate picture of his life and teaching, his associates and his prominent disciples

He was the son of a chief of a Sakya clan His father was the ruler of Kapilavastu lying on the north-east of India i e modern Nepal He was born in 623 B C under a sal tree, when his mother Mahamaya was going to her parents' place His mother died a week after his birth and he was brought up by his maternal aunt Prajapati He was named Siddhartha. He was taught by eight Brahmanas and was well-versed in the twelve arts, of which archery was one He was married to the Koliya princess, Yashodhara

According to the tradition, the astrologer had forecast about him the destiny either of an emperor or that of a mendicant of the first order and magnitude To avoid the fruition of the second part of the destiny his father took the greatest precaution to keep away from

observation all ugly sights of human life He was brought up in excessive comfort and luxury Whenever he was to go out, streets were cleared of either diseased or old and invalid people, care was taken to see that he might not come across a dead person carried on the street One day accidentally, he came across an old man, an invalid, and a dead man carried on a bier The terrible lot of humanity i. e. sickness, old-age and death set him thinking; he became gloomy and restive

After ten years of his married life, his son's birth was celebrated Instead of gladdening his heart, the occasion made him gloomier and pensive Birth, he thought, was the gateway of human miseries He wanted complete liberation from all kinds of pain and miseries which were afflicting humanity One night he left his royal palace to join the band of homeless ascetics Following the footsteps of the seekers of truth, he renounces the world; but he renounced the world in the prime of his youth-quite an unusual thing.

He became the disciple of Alar Kalama who taught him the "doctrines of nothingness", but his thirst for knowledge was not quenched Another teacher named Uddaka taught him the art and practice of Yoga; however he felt that his knawledge was incomplete. He decided to depend upon none but his own efforts to find out the path of supreme, eternal bliss Accompanied by five Brahmana ascetics, he spent six years in the forests of Uruvela in very deep study and meditation. He practised all severe penances and austerities which left him physically unfit and spiritually without progress, with the result he saw the futility of such practices and resumed the

natural way of living, this change in thinking of Gautama caused such disappointment among those five Brahmana ascetics that they left him immediately.

On an evening of Vaisakha full moon day, he went towards a Bo-tree and decided to settle there in meditation till he was able to attain supreme wisdom. On that very day, he realized the truth from within which he was seeking from without, he was at this time 35 years old He felt the freedom from ignorance and darkness, and spent seven more days at the same spot enjoying the supreme bliss of emancipation. Form this time, he was known as Buddha (the enlightened), Sakhya Muni and Bhagavan Tathagata

Having found the truth, Buddha wanted to impart the truth to his fellowmen "Of deathlessness, lo ! I disclose the portals, ye that have ears, come; harken and believe". He sought his former teachers Alar Kalama and Uddaka and those five Brahmana associates He "set rolling the wheel of "Dhamma" at the Deer Park Sarnath near Benares The first sermon was delivered at the same place Yasa, a wealthy banker of Benares, and many others joined his cult Within six months, he had sixty disciples formed the nucleus of his Buddhist Sangha.

At Rajgriha the king Bimbisara and his followers accepted his religion and later on, he went to his father's place where his father, his wife and many others were converted For his mission, he moved mostly in the eastern parts of India He preached his Faith at the following places Vaisali, Nalanda, Rajgriha, Benares, Pava, Kosambi, Setavy, Pataliputra, Bhandagama, Kushinara and Kapilvastu.

Daily, he and his monks went out for begging, they preached, meditated and discussed He preached for 45 years, at the age of eight years he was travelling with his cousin and disciple Ananda and on way he was overcome by weakness At Kushinara, he passed away between the sal trees in the year 543 B C giving final advice to Anand "O Ananda, be ye a lamp unto yourself Be ye refuge to yourself Betake yourself to no external refuge Hold fast to the truth as a lamp"

Q. 3 What were the main teachings of Buddhism ? What were the causes of its success in India ?

Ans The aim of the Sakyamuni was to find out the truth to help mankind from the clutches of death, diseases, old age and other pains and pangs of human life To discover the better path was his chief aim

The path of Buddhism is also known as "Golden Mean" The key-note of Buddhism is moderation in all aspects of life Buddhism is both a religion and a code of social ethics to increase the sum total of human happiness

The priestly class had made the vedic religion very ridiculous by introducing silly rituals a man may wash off his worst sins by paying proportionate fees to the priests who were believed to earn retri ution for him from Gods, the priefts were believed to be the representatives of Gods on this earth To acquire power, position or prosperity, one had merely to settle the fees with the priests for the same In short, the priests played upon the credulity and faith of the people and thus cashed

their miseries It was blind faith, absence of self-reliance to ameliorate one's conditions and thus abject dependence upon external forces which made people easy victims in the hands of the priests

Thus spiritual need of the age was self-evident, creation of faith in one's self Buddha taught that real salvation can only be achieved by one's own efforts and it comes from within, not from without Self-help was the best help

He preachad four noble truths and laid stress on moderation He asked people to avoid the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification He said that (1) life is full of suffering, (2)the cause of suffering can be found in the thirst for life, (3) by controlling the thirst suffering can be ended, (4) liberation can be obtained by following the path of duty (Eight right things)

To control the thirst for life, he showed a practical way. The way embodies eight virtues and is called the Path of Eight Virtues They are as follows

(1) Right views (2) Right resolve
(3) Right speech (4) Right action
(5) Right living (6) Right effort
(7) Right mindfulness (8) Right contemplation

All these eight steps are nothing but a code of practical ethics

The ultimate ideal of the soul was the liberation from the circle of births and deaths, this fact indicates that Buddhism had accepted the theory of transmigration

of souls By accepting free-will as a determinant of one's destiny, he accepted the belief that man was the maker of his own destiny. Karma-Theory is the sheet anchor of Buddhism

The causes of success of Buddhism in India.

During the Brahmanical period, the Brahman priests were the supreme rulers and they spared no pains to frighten people and to keep them ignorant There was no one to redeem the people from the clutches of the priests, nor did they know the way

Buddha came to them with a torch of light to help them realize the supreme bliss by their own efforts They would need no more the help of the exacting priests nor should they be frightened of the powerful gods At one stroke he frightened of the powerful gods At one stroke he removed the necessity of hated rituals and expensive ceremonies, of self-mortification and self-torture, and of mantras for the search of god and bliss He prescribed practical ethical ways to achieve salvation, and this appealed to the people as they were thereby freed from the priestly tyranny. A large number of people took shelter under the banner of this new, simple and living Faith

Besides thi , Buddha removed the man-made barriers of câste and colour distinctions Naturally, the appeal of Buddhism was greatest to all the down-trodden and neglected sections of the society. Also the doctrines of Buddhism are utilitarian and hence, they have become universal in their appeal With slight modifications, these doctrines become acceptable to people of other countries also

Before Buddhism, knowledge was the monopoly of the priestly class and of those who could take pains of mastering the very difficult language, namely, Sanskrit, since religious books were written in Sanskrit Buddha taught his doctrines in the language of the people. The results were obvious The spread of Buddhism can also be accounted by the missionary zeal of the disciples of Buddha, and the highly-developed organization (Sangha) which was created by Buddha Buddhism started its own sanghas which became the centres for the spread of light and learning Brahmana did not have such an organization and hence they had no control over their religion, while in these Buddhist churches, the monks and nuns lived the holy life and preached the people. The simplicity of their lives in contrast with the lives of Brahmanas appealed to the people more and Buddhism became at once a very popular faith

Above all the personality of Buddha had a great influence on the spread of Buddhism His magnetic charm and his powerful reason overpowered even the most learned Brahamana of the day and that in assemblies attended by a large number of people, the rationality of the Buddhism appealed to the common sense of the people and consequently Buddha was hailed as a saviour wherever he went Besides his renunciation of power, position and kingly privileges for the cause of suffering humanity inflamed the popular imagination and he became the most lovable personality of the time

State was also a very powerful and influential institution even in those times Since Buddha was coming

from a ruling family, he exercised considerable influence over the ruling section of the society All the members of his family embraced his Faith, besides, Bimbisara and other royal families took to his religion Thus, both among the mass and the masters the spread of Buddhism was assured

The story of king Asoka joining Buddhism is quite well-known His son Mahendra and his daughter Sanga-Mitra carried the banner of Buddhism right upto Ceylon.

Fortunately for Buddhism, it had no powerful rival There were many other religious sects but none contained such universal appeal as Buddhism It may be mentioned that the Bhagavata cult which flourished during the birth and spread of Buddhism exercised considerable influence over people and thus through it, the idol worship of Buddha entered the Buddhism of the later period

Q. 4 Estimate the effort of Buddhism on the Social and Political history of India.

Ans Buddhism had a tremendous influence on the Indian life in all its aspects–social, political and religious

It became a popular religion having followers from all castes Even a man of most humble origin began to aspire for the highest things of life, namely spiritual progress–thanks to Buddhism. By suing the language of the common people, Buddhism satisfied the spiritual needs of the rank and file. Besides, they could participate in the religious discourses organized by the monks Thus, religion and religious experience were brought within very easy access of every man

By rejecting external and formal rituals and at the same time laying greater stress on man than on god or gods, Buddhism, for the first time, humanized religion Man, not god, is the maker of his destiny

Like Christianity, Buddhism has its highly organized church, Buddhist Vihars run by the nuns and the monks became the centres of culture, learning and education A new religious literature came into existence, due to its easy language and simple treatment, the literature became very popular It both ennobled and entertained people

During this period, we find the great works of sculpture and architecture The image-worship was not in vogue in the Aryan religion, but during Buddhism it became very common. The Greeks encouraged this practice and Gandhara school of sculpture helped a lot in the spread of this art To-day almost all the museums in the world take pride in possessing a specimen of Indian sculpture of Buddhist era Walls of the caves were painted and stones carried the inscriptions of the doctrines of Buddhism The frescoes of a Buddhist temple are even to-day a source of inspiration to the modern artists

Buddhism went beyong national boundary to win fresh laurles in the neighbouring countries while the Indian monks went abroad to carry the message of Buddhism, many converts came to India on pilgrimage

The Buddhist doctrine of non-violence was accepted even by a mighty Emperor like Ashok It taught inaction for commission of cruel things but action for doing

better things The spirit of love permeates the entire philosophy of Buddhism; even animals should be respected and loved Of course, non-injury to animals has been carried too far both by Buddhists and Jains of to-day.

The goal of human life is not mere material prosperity in this world, it is to attain Nirvana which is known among the Hindus as Mukti i e. freedom from the cycles of birth and death This doctrine chastended the contemporary life which was laying strees on material comfort and by so doing it was making men more greedy.

Buddhism did not only bring a revolution in religion and social life of the people, it gave a new ideology. Man is the maker of his own destiny. Being a rational being, he was expected to think and act on his judgment By making man responsible for his good fortune as well as bad luck i e by teaching the doctrine of Karma, Buddha banished priest-made gods out of this world The basis of morality should be not fear of gods but ve for doing right thing Thus, in Buddhism we find swing from society to individual. The individual who was buried under the ballast of religion, and worn-out social traditions and institutions, was resurrected by Buddhism In short, Buddhism had done invaluable service to man.

Q. 5 Write a short note on Mahavira and his teaching.

According to Jain mythology, Jainism is as old as the certain itself. Of its twenty four teachers, Rishabha is believed to be the oldest one

But nothing is known about the twenty two teachers called 'Teerthankaras,' the 23rd teacher known as Parshva is an historical figure He was a prince of Benares He taught the Gospels of non-injury to life and truthful speech. He died 250 years before the death of Mahavira It is believed by Jaina that Parshva's predecessor lived 844000 years before him

Vardhamana Mahavira came from a rich Kshatriya family of Vaisali (Twenty-seven miles north of modern Patna). His mother was related to the ruling families of Anga, Videha and Magadha His father Siddhartha was the chief of the Lichavi clan Being tired of worldly life, he renounced his home and joined the order of Parshva. There he practised self-mortification for a period of 13 years, at the end of which he attained the supreme knowledge According to tradition, he almost starved himself to death at one stage.

He became a founder of a new religious order known as 'Nirgranthas' i e free from bonds He was called Mahavira i e a great hero Since he had overcome all passions, he is called Jina and his followers are called Jainas He preached in the same regions as Buddha, and met the same royal personages as Bimbisara, Ajathashatru etc His religion was open to all the sections of the society

Jainism does not accept the existence of God, but Jainas believe in the existence of a supernatural energy which sustains all beings. Like the Sankhya too, Mahavira had a belief in the existence of plurality of individnal souls The souls become bigger or smaller accordiug to

the bodies they inhabit Jainism believes in the dual personality of man, material and spiritual They believe in the doctrine of transmigration of Souls. The individual is affected by its own Karmas and these Karmas keep the soul tied to the cycle of birth and death The goal of human life is to seek liberation from this cycle by living an austere life and by practising the given great Vows The five vows include non-killing, non-lying, non-stealing, non-hoarding and celebacy To attain freedom from bondage, one must also practise the following golden principles. (1) Right Faith, (2) Right knowledge, (3) Right conduct

Jainism considers all animate and inanimate objects as Possessing consciousness of different degrees It lays an exagerated emphasis on the doctrine of Ahimsa (non – injury) The Jainas tie a piece of cloth on the mouth and nose to prevent inhaling of small insects The Jaina monks live a very austere life, none can rival them in self-torture and self-mortification Highest virtue consists in tormenting body to chasten the soul End of life through starvation is not an uncommon phenomenon in Jainism.

Jainism split into two sects after the death of Mahavira, the 24th Teerthankara, Digambars who discard clothing, and Shvetambars who wear white dress Monks and nuns are called yatis, while the house-holders living a worldly life are called laity

In the initial stage, Jainism was a great success Jainism thrived on account of its excellent discipline and love of learning Jaina scholars quietly persued the path of knowledge and contributed a great deal to philosophy,

literature and sciences They had no zeal for the number of followers Chandragupta Maurya Samprati, Kharavela and others were its first distinguished patrons. Later during Harsha's reign, it exerted great influence in the far South and Eastern India Princes and merchants accepted the faith of Jainism Unlike Buddhism, Jainism did not leave the borderland of India but also unlike Buddhism it has many followers today in India and especially in Bombay, Central India, in the north-west India and in Rajputana

The contribution of Jainism in the development of literature and art is considerable Its literature has enriched the Prakrit (i e. Ardhamagadhi), the language of the people The sources of the Jaina thought and inspiration are traced in the literature of the south Jainism has enriched the Indian architecture Especially during the 11th and 12th centuries Jaina architecture was at its best One has only to visit places like Mount Abu and other towns in the Northern Gujarat to evaluate the contribution of Jainism to Indian architecture The temple of the Jaina (i e Devalayas) are known for their wealth of detail in stone and their poise and balance, most of these temples are built on rocky hills

Q 6 Describe the economic, social and religious life during the age of Buddhism and Jainism

Or

Give an account of social, political and religious condition of India prior to the invasion of Alexander.

Ans. The majority of the population lived in small villages Village as an economic unit was not at all

affected by the changes from the outside. It still retained its autonomy in all matters concerning itself Life being simple, village was self-subsistent The inhabitants of most villages were cultivating land or tending the cattle. There were some villages which were mainly populated by carpenters, smiths, potters etc.

Around the village, there lived a community of cattlebreeders. They tended their own cattle as well as those of the king But the pasture lands for the cattle of the king and for the rest were separate

The ruling section, commercial and trading classes and skilled craftsmen lived in towns and cities. The houses were generally built of timber and brick; the lthy sections lived in highly decorated buildings ˆˈgriha or the royal palace was built of stone and it ad a spacious garden around itself.

There was greater division of labour and hence specialisation in the towns than in villages. The industrial crafts and arts were grouped into various calling and professions There were metals-workers, wood-workers, dyers, weavers, painters, ivory-makers, house-builders, etc. Proficiency in each trade and craft was very high during this period. There was a kind of trade union of the people following the same calling, known as Shreni (Guild) These guilds of various industries had their own independent organization and enjoyed great autonomy

Many arts and crafts were considered to be low and degrading, those who followed them were socially out-castes They had to live at the end of the town-far

away from living places of decent men Tanners, hunters and butchers were untouchables Besides, actors and dancers were not so honourable as metal-workers, potters and ivory workers

Internal trade was carried both on land and by river A partnership of big business magnates was a common commercial organization There was one trade-route from Benares to Broach via Rajputana. The caravans carried Indian goods like silk, cotton cloth, jwellery, gold and ivory as far as Babylon. Owing to internal peace dnring this period, trade and commerce developed rapidly

Though the old barter system persisted, the use of metal coins was prevalent Even promissory notes on private account vere increasingly used Large amount of capital was borrowed for trade purposes and the rate of borrowing was considerable

Since this was period of great political and religious movements, social conditions could not remain stagnant Brahmanas had lost their former glory and power. Their place in society was taken by landed aristocracy and merchant princes But the caste system was still persisting. The society was divided into various classes according to profession Some professions were considered to be socially degrading, Eating of food with a member of the lower caste was strictly forbidden The class of Kshatriyas was turning into landed aristocracy. The practice of engaging a slave or a servant was prevalent among big families.

Brahmanas took to the teaching profrssion The houses of the Brahmana teachers were known as Guru-

kulas Pupils used to stay with their teachers till they completed their studies and they had to perform all the house-hold and other tasks given by their teachers. Besides, Buddhist Viharas, and Sangharams were becoming new centres of learning Since the content of education was mainly religious, in these Buddhist schools, instructions centred round their own faith.

The forms of government prevailing those days were not of a uniform pattern There were four different types of administration—Absolute monarchy with imperial rule, simple monarchy, oligarchy and democratic form of government The kingdoms of Kosala and Magadha were known as imperial powers (samrajya), the small states of Matsya, Panchala, Kuru, Madhyadesha were mere kingdoms having limited powers, the small communities of Bhargas, Vrijis, Mauryas and Mallas were governed by oligarchy of landed aristocracy, while in most of the ons on the west of India, democratic form of government was prevalent Besides these four forms of administration, a new experiment was tried in the city of Patiala in the Indus delta where the city was governed by a senate of elderly and experienced people and two kings

Kingship was hereditary, but there was no descendant from the main line, the choice for the successor was restricted to the royal family But kingship was no longer the monopoly of the Kshatriya Even Shudras, such was the case in Magadha, could aspire to imperial rule.

CHAPTER VI

THE RISE OF THE MAGADHA EMPIRE

Q 1. Write a brief note on the occupation of Indus Valley by the Persians.

Ans · While in the eastern India, Magadha was emerging as a first rate political power, the north-west of India remained open to foreign invasion During the reign of Bimbisara, he received an embassy from the king Pukkusari of the Gandhara, the king of Gandhara wished to enlist the help of the powerful king of Magadha against the invasion from the king of Persia Cyrus, the founder of Persian empire (558 to 530 B C) attacked the fertile valley of the Indus His reign extended right up to the Hindukush mountains and his empire included Gandhara (North-west-Frontier) and Takshashila

Darius (521 to 485 B C), the most illustrious successor of Cyrus, sent an expedition to explore a maritime passage from the mouth of the Indus to Persia Skylax who commanded this expedition annexed to h s dominion the whole of the Indus Valley as far as the deserts of Rajputana This conquest swelled the treasures of the Persian king and he recruited his army from the hilly tribes of Gandhara

The successors of Darius were so weak that they could not govern this Indian Dominion, with the result that the North-west regions of India were divided into a number of small and petty kingdoms which were divided into a number of small and petty kingdoms

which were practically independent These distracted conditions of Northwest India made the entry of the Greek forces into India easy.

It is said that Indian art and architecture were influenced, during that time, by the Persian ideas. The idea of a political unit as big as an empire was hereafter rooted in the Indian soil by the Persian Emperors. The term 'Satrap' as a political subdivision of an empire is of Persian origin.

Q 2 Who was Alexandar the Great? Trade the course of his invasion of India

Ans. Alexandar the Great, the son of philip of Macedon, was the crowned king of Macedon in the year 336 B C He was brought up under the training and guidance of Aristotle who trained him for the role which he was to play later on The spirit of military adventure made him dream of a wide and far-flung empire As a first step towards the realization of his ambitious dream, he conquered the whole of Greece, and later on invaded and annexed Persia, Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt

Alexander had cherished long the ambition to subjugate India In the year 330 B. C after inflicting repeated defeats on the Persian king in 333 and 331 B C he started his expedition to conquer India During this period, the political conditions of the north-west were far from stable. After the weakening of the Persian hold over the north-west regions and Gandhara, the entire territory was divided into small, yet independent kingdoms which were warring among themselves. Their

internal jealousy and suspision for one another rendered them easy prey to the might of the Greek forces In the year 327 B C. he subdued the kingdom of Kabul and he received an embassy from the King of Takshashila who sought the help of Alexander to overpower his arch–enemy Porus Before crossing the river Indus, he conquered the powerful tribes of Swar and Bajaur He met with some resistance from these tribes whom he punished ruthlessly In February 326 B C Alexandar, the Great went across the Indus River 16 miles above Attock He was received very warmly by Ambhi, the king of Takshashila and later on, he defeated Abhisara, the neighbouring king without shedding a drop of blood Inspired by his early successes with Indian kings, he decided to march ahead aud to launch a full–fledged attack on Porus who ruled over the region lying between Jhelum and Chinab Fortunately, for Porus, the river Jhelum was in spate Moreover, he had a disciplined army which included 30,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry, 300 elephants and 300 chariots Porus was ready to meet Alexandar on the bank of the Jhelum

Alexandar was waiting for a suitable opportunity to cross the river After waiting long, on one dark and rainy night, he crossed the river stealthily and took the army of Porus by surprise A pitched battle on the plains of Ravi was savagely fought on either side Porus defended val antly but ultimately, he had to accept his defeat before the superior army and clear strategy of Alexandar But Alexandar turned Porus into his royal friend by giving him most magnanimous treatment Porus was given his kingdom back without any condition

Alexandar could not go beyond the river Beas for two reasons. The news of a mighty army of the powerful emperor of Magadha lying in wait on the other side of the river Beas, coupled with the fact that he had come far away from his empire compelled Alexandar to beat retreat On his way homeward, he had to pay a heavy price for coming to the very heart of India the greater part of his army perished owing to untold suffering and hardships caused by the defeated tribes who avenged the merciless treatment they received from Alexandar Finally, Alexandar the Great, himself fell ill and died a sick man in 323 B C at Babylon Thus, came the tragic end of glorious millitary adventurer

Alexandar left a very efficient system of administration as his legacy to India The entire conquered territory lying on the west of the river Jhelum was divided into so many districts, called Satraps and the appointed Greek Governors over each one of them He entered into a political alliance with the Kingdoms on the east Jhelum

Q 3 Write a short note on the Saisunaga and the Nanda Dynasties

Ans During the seventh century B C there were about sixteen independent kingdoms in India Among these states, Magadha was emerging as a powerful kingdom. It dominated the political scene of the time and exerted influence on the course of Indian history

Under the reign of Saisunaga dynasty, Magadha was emerging as a first rate political power Magadha,

the capital of which was Rajgriha, was ruled by three powerful dynasties, namely, the Saisunaga, the Nanda, and the Maurya It was under the Maurya dynasty that the whole of Northern India was welded into one political unit

Besides rising as a first rate polical power during the seventh and the sixth centuries, Magadha was acquiring importance of a centre of cultural and religious activities Buddhism and Jainism spread their religions from Magadha, it became a centre of light and learning

History of this period is reconstructed from the Buddhist and the Jainist literature of the time and also from the Puranas Unfortunately, some of the facts recorded in the above mentioned literature are found to be conflicting, yet the validity of most of the facts cannot be doubted.

According to the authority of Puranas, Saisunaga was a chieftain of Benares and he founded his Dynasty in 642 B C at the capital of Rajagriha However, the greatness of Magadha was well-founded by Bimbisara, the fifth ruler of the Saisunaga Dynasty The reign of Bimbisara lasted from 583 to 554 B C.

Bimbisara had married the princesses of Kosala, Madra, and Videha Kings His queen Kosala Devi received the estate of Kashi as pinmoney from her father, besides his matrimonial alliances with powerful states including Kosala, and Vaisali helped him to absorb them and thus to extend the Magadha power to the borders of Nepala Kosala which was a formidable rival of Magadha was united with Magadha by marriage allia

With the result Magadha became a powerful state under the rule of Bimbisara During his rule, Buddha and Mahavira visited his capital frequently to spread their respective Faiths in the entire domain of Magadha He was known as Shrenika among the Jainas He ruled for twenty eight years and abdicated his throne in favour of his son Ajatshatru According to the Buddhist tradition, Bimbisara was killed, by Ajatashatru, his own son This statement seems to be nearer the truth because soon after his accession to power, Ajatashatru had to face the combined hostile forces of Kashi, Kosala, and the Vrijian i e those who were his relatives

He defeated the forces of Kashi and annexed Kashi to his kingdom He had to fortify the village of Pataliputra to launch a fight against the Mallas of Kushinagar and the Vrijis of Vaisali He was able to break the union of the two States and ultimately annexed both Kosala and Vaisali He gave a welcome to both the faiths of Buddhism and Jainism But due to his indifference towards Buddhism he naturally became unpopular among the followers of Buddha Mahavira and Buddha died during his reign After the death of the latter, a council of the learned and leading Buddhists of the time was held at Raj Griha where the Buddhist Scriptures were compiled

According to the Puranas, Ajatashatru was succeeded by his son Darsaka in the year 527 B C During his reign a Persian expedition under the leadership of Skylax visited India. Darsaka's son Udaya succeeded him in 503 B C and his son shifted the capital to Patliputra

Later on, Nandi, Vardhana and Mahanandin ruled for 82 years, and Mahanandin's illegitimate son Mahapadma Nanda usurped throne and the Nanda Dynasty started from 413 B C but which ended in 322 B C

Little is known about the Nanda Dynasty, and whatever records are given about it in the contemporary literature i e in the Puranas, Buddhist and Jaina literature in the Greek accounts as well as in the Kharvels inscriptions and in the historical play Mudrarakshasa, are found to be conflicting with each other The most probable story is as follows

Mahapadma Nanda, the founder of the Nanda Dynasty was not a Kshatriya Perhaps he was born of a Sudra lady and his father might be the last king of Saisunaga Dynasty He was a great warrior and destroyed all the Kshatriya dynasties He maintained a large army and his treasury was always full Dhanananda was the last ruler of this dynasty and he was removed from the throne by the famous King, Chandragupta, the founder of the Maurya dynasty in the year 322 B C

CHAPTER VII

THE MAURYAS

Q. 1. Explain aud illustrate the following remarks· "The advent of the Maurya Dynasty marks the passage from darkness to light for the historian".

Ans. History, if anything, is a faithful record of facts The task of the historian is unenviable when he has to depend upon legends, contemporary religious literature and such records of little authenticity for his facts to build the edifice of history The history of India prior to the rise of the Maurya Dynasty was neither precise nor clear There were many wide gaps in the historical records which had to be filled in by bold hypothesis Though there is no need to doubt the authenticity and validity of history prior to the Maurya dynasty, there is a great variety of authentic and dependable sources of information about the period beginning with Maurya Dynasty

To begin with, the Arhashastra of Kautilya which is a book on the art and science of administration gives glimpses about the contemporary social and political life Kautilya was a minister (Maha-amatya) of Chandragupta the founder of the Maurya Dynasty Though the book is primarily concerned with forms of government, law and customs in generol, it does reflect the contemporary period

The second source of information about the Maurya Dynasty is a Sanskrit drama Mudra-Rakshasa, composed by Vishakha Datta depicts the rise of the Mauryas, the

downfall of the Nandas and the character of Kautilya. Besides, the life during the Maurya Dynasty can be gleaned from the Vishnu Purana. Another valuable source of our information about the Mauryas is the memoirs of Megasthenes who was a Greek ambassador at the court of Chandragupta during the closing year of the fourth century B C Besides the Greek writers Justin, Plutarch, Atrian, Curtis make references to the invasion of Alexandar over India The edicts of Ashoka on rocks and pillars give valuable information of the age These stone inscriptions are the oldest Indian epigraphic records The Buddhist tradition preserved in Ceylon and other religious works give invaluable information about Ashoka, as an apostle of peace and morality The Jaina literature depicts the life of Chandragupta who in his old age accepted the faith of Jainism The relics of the Mauryan architecture give the cultural history of the time

With the rise of the Maurya Dynasty, India remained no more a country divided into small innumerable kingdoms Chandragupta established the political unity in the country by bringing all kingdoms–small and big under his own banner with the result the history after the advent of Chandragupta, becomes clear, precise and readable

When Alexandar was in India, he was approached by Chandragupta for help against the Nanda Dynasty This meeting is historically very important, since it is easy to fix the year of the rise of the Maurya Dynasty

Q. 2. Who was the founder of the Mauryan Kingdom in India ? Give a short sketch of his career

Ans Chandragupta Maurya was the founder of the Maurya Dynasty Little is authentically known about

his ancestors; the various accounts of the different sources about his ancestors are conflicting and therefore have little historical values According to Puranas, he was the son of a Sudra lady named Mura. Vishakha Datta in his historical drama Mudrarakshasa calls him Vrisala which means born of Sudra woman. The Jaina tradition considers him grandson of a ',Mayury Poshakha" (Keeper of peacocks), and therefore, he is known as Maurya This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the bottom of Ashoka pillars, there are the figures of peacocks

Modern historical researches have an altogether different tale to tell According to this theory, Chandragupta was a near relative, a kinsman of the early Nandas Unlike the later Nandas, he was coming from a Kshatriya clan known as Moriya, this clan was ruling in Piphalvana Therefore, Maurya only indicates the clan from which he came

Very little, again, is known about his childhood It pears he was a student of a Taxilian Brahmana named autilya or Vishnu Gupta Kautilya, better known as Chanakya taught the art of science of state-craft At the age of 25, Chandragupta was appointed the Commander-in-chief of the forces of the Nanda. Neither his ambition nor his abilities could rest satisfied with this position

The Nanda king was very unpopular. It is said he treated the Brahmans with the greatest contempt Vishnu Gupta took this treatment as a personal insult to himself To avenge the insult, he allied with Chandragupta to overthrow the Nandas Chandragupta, was very willing

to espouse the cause of this clever Brahmans since he cherished the ambition to become an emperor. Unfortunately for them their revolt proved immature and they fled from the Magadha in search of a safe shelter

There is a story that Chandragupta went to persuade Alexandar to attack the Magadha Alexandar did not agree to his plan Consequently, Chandragupata retired in the forest of Vindhya along with his teacher and helper. Vishnu Gupta was a great diplomat and an astute politican His mind was planning and scheming.

During this time, north-west of India presented a scene of political confusion and chaos After the death of Alexandar, the Greek Empire was breaking down. The Punjab revolted against the rule of the foreign governors Chandragupta was quick to seize this opportunity and he became the leader of the revolt with the other warlike tribes who eventually accepted his leadership He beseiged the Greek garrison and levelled it to the ground. He became the ruler of the Punjab This new development facilitated the plan of Chandragupta and his teacher, Chanakya.

According to Mudra-Rakshasa, the second revolt against the Nanda was bloodless It seems, thanks to the diplomacy of Chanakya, that when Chandragupta reached the Magadha, conditions were ripe for the overthrow of the Nanda who was an unpopular ruler The last Nanda King Dhananada was dethroned and killed by Chandragupta. Thus he became the monarch of an empire He commanded an army which was vast in nu nd powerful in strength

But he soon realized that the imperial crown of the Magadha was not without throns, he had to subdue enemies–both internal and external who were lying in wait to overthrow Chandragupta. But Chanakya cleared his way of all obstacles and eventually Chandragupta was able to extend the Maurya Empire in all directions His empire comprised of the whole of the northern India including the region lying between the Indus and the Ganges, and the Narbada in the South His army conquered Saurasthra and Malwa in the west, and in the south his power was extended right upto Mysore.

Chandragupta began his political career with the defeat of the Greek Governors in the Punjab After assuming the reign of the Magadha, he drove away the Greek Governors who were entrenched firmly in the four provinces of the North, namely, Kabul, Kandhar, Herat Gedrosia This was too much for the Greek Emperor os Nikator whose army was known both for its and martial spirit He was already overlord of , Persia, Badaksham and Asia Minor Like his cessor, he cherished the ambition to conquer India. he learnt about the treatment to his Greek overnors in India, he marched over India with great show of military.

Under the leadership of Chandragupta, north–west of India and the Frontier Province were politically united The political disruption and internal quarrels which made easy the conquest of India by Alexandar did not exist

Though the details of the battle are not known, this event established the military greatness of Chandragupta not only in India but abroad also The mighty empire of the west was humbled for the first time by an Indian ruler

The Greek emperor withdrew his claim over the Greek dominions in India as well as the four provinces of Kabul, Kandhar, Herat and Gedrosia. Moroever, he married his daughter Helen to Chandragupta and thus cemented the bond of freindship. In return, Chandragupta gave him a gift of 500 elephants

The effects of this victory were far-reaching on the Indian political life The victory of Chandragupta pushed the border of the Magadha empire right upto the Hindukush and thus Chandragupta became the undisputed over-lord of the whole of India Moreover, Seleukos established diplomatic relationship with India by sending his ambassador, Megasthenes, to the court of Chandragupta The accounts of Megasthenes are invaluable in constructing Indian history during his stay In short, the victory over Seleukos earned for him the tittle of the first Indian Emperor and his empire included the whole of North India, North-West Fronties, Afghanistan, and the Valley of Narbada in the south and Bengal on the east From political chaos and internecine wars, Indian emerged as a united, stable and powerful political unit During his rule of 24 years he consolidated his empire In the year 278 B C he abdicated the throne and died

According to Jaina tradition, he renounced the political power to become a begging Jaina mo

followed his Guru Bhadra Bahu to Mysore where he killed himself by starvation–a kind of death which was much praised by Jainism Mahavira also died similarly

Thus came the end of a mighty emperor in a dramatic way, his entrance to as well as exit from the political scene is most spectacular Some historians equal him with Napoleon. Besides being a military genius, he was the statesman of the first order and his system of administration survived him for several centuries His rule was both efficient and benevolent In short by establishing peace and order where formally chaos and disorder prevailed and by ensuring an orderly government where there was misrule, he fulfilled the long felt needs of the people and, therefore, his region is correctly described as a golden period in Indian history

Q. 3. Write a short note on Kautilya's Artha-shastra

Ans Kautilya was a scholar–statesman He was the hmana minister of Chandragupta He is generally own as Chanakya, and 'Chanakyaniti' has become a current phrase indicating shrewdness, craftiness and deep diplomacy involving many subtle intrigues. Even Alexandar was not prepared to meet the mighty army of Magadha under the Nandas, but before this cleverest and wiliest diplomat of Magadha army, power and purse were nothing

It seems he was a durvasa of the age The Nandas did not respect the Brahamanas, on the contrary they insulted them The unlucky Nanda king insulted this Brahmana who decided to uproot the Nanda Dynasty and to place a deserving man of the royal blood or of a Kshatriya family as the king of Magadha,

He had observed Chandragupta Murya as a commander in-chief of the Nanda's army and in him he saw a future mighty military man of India endowed with the qualities befitting a king. He helped him to revolt against the the Nanda king. Their first attempt failed miserably but it did not dishearten the shrewd and crafty Brahmin diplomat though both of them had to hide themselves from the mighty army of Magadha.

The ministers and the politicians of the Nanda kings were not free from wiles and intrigues but Kautilya out-did them all. He defeated them in their own field. A part from his politics, he was a perfect Brahmana. Though he was ugly and deformed, yet he was a powerful personality of the Maurya reign, but he himself lived a life of extreme poverty. He is the Machiavelli of India and he wrote a treatise on the Political Theory and Practice for the guidance of Chandragupta. This treatise is known as 'Kautilya's Artha-shastra.'

The Artha-Shastra of Kautilya is the first book in Sanskrit literature which deals with the political theory. Kautilya developed a science of administration and state-craft. He gives exhaustive treatment to each branch of politics.

The Artha-shastra supports the strong centralized empire governed by a supreme monarch i. e. an autocrat ruler who must be advised by his ministers appointed by him. The king is to pay respect to Brahmana and his ministers.

The book discusses the administration of a village or a town as well as central and provincial government and also the administration of excise, shipping, army, finance, spy-system and civil and criminal law,

Kautilya's Artha-shastra supports the aggressive wars and the king is to consider his neighbour as his enemy; he should not trust either his wife, or son, or a minister. The king is allowed to make and break promises if such things suit his interests. But the king must be devoted to the welfare of the subjects He must find his "happiness in the happiness of his subjects."

Chandragupta's administration and Government were reared on the principles enunciated by Kautilya and his administrative system lasted for several centuries The Arthashastra gives us glimpses of the political ideals of the period when Chandragupta was bidding for imperial throne. Also, the book refers to the political conditions rthern India alone, there was a number of small etty Kingdoms warring with one another The ice of political unity in this region caused India to prostrate before the invasion of Alexandar. Thanks the diplomacy of Kautilya that India was united under rule of one king and this consolidation of power enabled her to defeat the mighty forces of the Greek Emperor Seleukos later on

Q. 4 Write a short note on Bindusara

Ans : Bindusara(299–273 B C)succeeded Chandragupta and ruled for 25 years His Greek name was 'Amitraghata' i e the slayer of the enemies. Having inherited a very well-equipped army and efficient administration he was successful in extending the Maurya empire. The limit of the Maurya empire in the reign of Chandragupta extended in the south upto the valley of the Narbada,

during the rule of Ashoka, only Kalinga in the South was added to the Maurya kingdom, though Ashoka was the ruler of almost the entire South India From the above facts, it is concluded that Bindusara played no mean part in conquering the South except the province of Kalinga According to Hemchandra, Jain writer and Taranalh-the Tibetan historian, Bindusara had a very successful military career and he was the master of all the land between Western and Eastern seas.

Bindusara maintained diplomatic relationship with Greek and Egypt Seleukos' son Antiochos sent an ambassador named Deimachos, and the king of Egypt sent an embassy under the leadership of Dionysius

He established viceroyalties both at Takshashila and Ujjayini Asoka's viceroyalty at both these places gave him experience and breadth of vision

The popular conception that Bindusara was a weak and timid ruler and that he had a weak personality is not collaborated by historical evidences His military achievements in the South were of no order, but unfortunately for him, he is eclipsed by the powerful personalities of his father and son

Q. 5. Write a critical note on Ashoka as man and monarch

Ans. According to Puranas, Ashoka was born in 295 B C When Bindusara died, there were many claimants to the throne. Ashoka had to make good his claim to the throne and thus ensured a struggle for power among all the claimants Though Bindusara died in 273 B C Ashoka was not crowned till the year 270 or 269 B C.

According to Buddhist tradition, Ashoka's claim to the throne was doubtful He delighted in inflicting all kinds of torments and tortures upon others and he succeeded to the throne by putting to death his elder brother Susima. Thus, it is concluded that he was crowned after five years because his title to the throne was doubtful and he wrenched the throne from his elder brother. According to K. P. Jayaswal, Ashoka was crowned in 270 B C as he reached the mature age of 24 years in the very year of 270 B C It seems that the Buddhist traditions have depicted him as cruel and blood-thirsty because the dramatic change in his character during later years can be accounted by the influence of Buddhism As a matter of fact, Ashoka was a very kind-hearted, tolerant and generous king

He began his political career with agression and conquests He subdued a fresh revolt in Takshashila and about eight years after his coronation, he invaded and conquered Kalinga on the south-east (Modern Orissa) This conquest made him the master of the whole of India excluding Tamil countries of the south. His empire extended right upto Afghanistan in north-west, Kashmir and the neighbouring countries in the north, Bengal in the East, and Kalinga in the south

The battle of Kalinga is not so much important for the extension of his regal power as for the spectacular change in his character and hence in his career as a king. The people of kalinga did not yield to the might of Ashoka without offering a very stubborn and stiff resistance With the result, there ensured human butchery

and massacre on an unprecedented scale and magnitude. This scene of human misery, pain and extensive suffering caused an indelible impression upon the mind of Ashoka.

people To remind people of their Dharma, he issued edicts i e moral precepts which inscribed on the rocks and pillars in the various parts of his empire Asoka also sent missions to different countries to spread Buddhism Thus he played a very important role in spreading the faith of Buddhism throughout the length and breadth of his empire Thanks to him, Buddhism spread to Ceylon, Tamil countries, Egypt and also Greece His son Mahendra and his daughter Sanghmitra went to Ceylon to propagate the faith of Buddhism

Much has been known to us about Ashok from his edicts In Kalinga Edict 1, he says, "All men are my children, and like their father, it is my first duty to promote their happiness and moral well-being here and hereafter" In his pillar Edict IV, he asks his officers to look upon his subjects with tenderness, love and care with which a nurse treats a child Welfare of his people should be the aim of a king He built roads, constructed wells along the roads, he established public hospitals for the people and animals throughout his realm

Buddhism was made the state religion and he did his level best to propagate its doctrine He convened a council of the Buddhists to decide the scriptures Though he exhibited much energy and enthusiasm for Buddhism, he was not a bigot He was tolerant to other faiths, and encouraged them by offering them a liberal treatment and other concessions Brahmanas, Nirgranthas, Ajivikas–all found shelter in his regime. In short, his religion was humanitarian and did not end in worship of one cult or the other Ashoka was a great admirer of art The

stone pillars in which he inscribed his edicts were monolithic and highly polished He built stupas, chaityas, viharas, and cave-houses for the use of the monks Sanchi stupa in Bhopal is very well-known Architecture and religion went hand in hand

It is very remarkable that Ashoka lived upto his ideals, though he was a great emperor of a vast and far-flung empire He ruled in the interest of the people and preferred to call himself their servant He styled himself, "Devanam Priya" or "Priyadarsi", i e beloved of the gods Even today Ashoka's regime is associated with justice, purity and social welfare He brought the influence of religion to bear upon politics and thus, he chastended politics and made it more humane and less formal Thus, Ashok is the most loveable personality in the history of India and his name rings in the heart of the people of the world

Q, 6 Sketch the extent of the Mauryan Empire at its zenith and describe its System of Imperial Government

Ans At its zenith the vast Maurya empire extended in the north-west to Afghanistan and Baluchistan In the west, it included the entire region now called Saurashtra In the south the border of the empire reached as far as Mysore In the east the whole of Bengal and Kalinga were the dominions of the Mauryas

The administrative system embracing such a far-flung empire was first evolved and developed during the regime of the Mauryan regime The administration of the vast Greek empire was organized by a system of appointing

governors for each state or dominion The same pattern of administration was adopted for the governance of such a vast empire as of Mauryas. The entire empire was divided into four political or administrative zones For each zone a Viceroy was appointed The north-west zone was under the viceroyalty of Takshashila Similarly the central and western states were governed from Ujjayini, and Southern dominions were governed by the viceroyalty of Tosali, while Magadha, Kosala, and other eastern states were governed directly by the emperor whose capital was Pataliputra. The viceroys were appointed from among the members of the royal family

The King was the undisputed fountain of power and the head of the entire administration Kingship was hereditary The form of administration and government may be called a benign autocracy In no case, the king could turn a despot by flouting the will of the people As a matter of fact, as Smith says, "The administration was a highly elaborate machinery with a full supply of departments managed by carefully graded state officials with well-defined duties" Even Chandragupta who wielded wide power was none the less "a constitutional monarch bound by the common law of Aryavarta"(Havell) Kautilya in his Arthashastra declares, "Whatever pleases his subjects, a King shall consider as good" The ideal king administered the country in the interest of the people

As a central figure of the administration, the King enjoyed wide powers but in return he had to discharge his obligations in virtue of his headship. He had many duties and responsibilities No important policy could

be framed or executed without his prior sanction Not only had he to administer his province himself but he was expected to keep a close and personal supervision over the administration of the rest of the provinces of his empire This superintendence over everything made great demands over the energies of the King He went through the official correspondence, interviewed his ministers and spies, and devised himself administrative and military measures He was expected to scrutinize revenue returns, to examine accounts, to note the incidents and happenings in the country as well as in the towns, to attend petitioners personally and a host of such other duties The king was over-burdened He was the servant of the people.

The powers which the King enjoyed were very wide, Besides being the head of the administration, he headed the army in the battle-field Justice was administered by him and it was he who awarded punishments to the law-breakers He was primarily responsible for the selection of all high officials and he also laid down the policy which they were expected to carry out on his behalf He was also the fountain of justice and consequently could grant immunity or pardon to deserving persons

In the discharge of his multiferious duties and other obligations, the King was assisted by the King on their merits and ability The council of ministers was known as Mantri Parishad Each minister was responsible for one portfolio and he was assisted by two secretaries and a large number of under-secretaries Each official was responsible for the efficient working of his department The inner cabinet consisted of the chief minister, the

Purohita, the Yuvaraja or the heir-apparent and the Senapati or the Commander-in-chief The other ministers were as follows-the Finance Minister, the Minister of works, and the head of the executive, revenue, and judiciary services The ministers had joint as well as several responsibility for the business which transpired in the council The council framed the policy of the government and appointed provincial governors and departmental heads

To transact the business of the government efficiently, the secretariat was divided into various departments, a superintendent was considered responsible for the efficient running of his department. There were separate departments for education, medical relief, famine relief, irrigation mining etc

The duties of the Government were far and wide Besides maintaining law and order in the Kingdom, and protecting the people from foreign aggression, the Government dispensed justice according to Dharma Shastra; in the latter work Government appointed a judge to be assisted by 3 scholars to interpret Dharma Shastra For discharging all these and other beneficiary works, the Government was entitled to tax the people, thus the collection of the revenue was a direct responsility of the Government

The whole Kindom was divided into four administrative units or provinces Each province was under the charge of the Governor who came from the royal family A province was sub-divided into districts and a district into villages The district officer was called "Sthanika",

The village was the smallest unit of civil administration The village headman, Gramani was appointed by the Government but generally the post was hereditary He collected the revenue and maintained the accounts Besides, he kept other official records about the village and he was supposed to supply accurate information about the social and economic conditions of the village. In his duties, he was generally assisted by the village elders, called the Panchayat 'Gopa' was an officer in charge of a group of villages

Megasthenes describes the excellent municipal arrangement at the Imperial capital, Pataliputra. Mayors or

Besides the above three Boards, there were the Board of Industries, the Board for collecting revenue and the Board for keeping statistics about social and economic conditions of the city There was a separate Board to look after the foreigners who lived in the capital.

The military was efficiently organized The recruitment of the army was done by the State and not by private individuals The payment to the army was made directly by the State; with the result the King was able to maintain well-equipped and disciplined armed forces The army consisted of the infantry, the cavalry, the elephants, and the chariots–in all, 7,00,00 A contingent of doctors and nurses supplemented the armed forces.

The king appointed a Senapati, i e Commander-in-Chief who was responsible for the maintenance of an efficient military force He was also consulted by the king in planning for war A staff of 30 members, who ouped themselves in six boards of 5 members each, -sisted the Senapati Thus the administration of the army was well organized and departmentalized There was a separate board, for each Navy, Transport Infantry, Cavalry, Chariot and elephants The army was well-equipped with defensive and offensive weapons

Ports and ships were maintained by the State both for commercial as well as military purposes, so also the roads

The administration of justice was made more systematic. Law acquired a distinct meaning as against traditions and customs The basis of law were dharma

or justice, vyavahara or mutual consent, Charita or social custom, and rajashasana or edict issued by the king Civil law was codified under the following heads . marriage, dowry, inheritance, deposits, debt, gambling etc In civil cases, the Hindu law which was mostly based on shastras was administered by the King himself in the capital To interpret the Shastras, he was assisted by three learned Brahmanas, and also three other judges In towns and villages, Panchayats composed of elderly and experienced persons, settled the disputes The criminal law includes all offences against the State, lapses on the part of the government officers, and deviation from caste rules and guild laws The guilty was punished severely · mutilation of limbs, whipping and even death were very common punishments. Such deterrent punishments, though inhuman, had salutary effects there were few crimes Thefts were so exceptional that people kept their houses unlocked and unbarred

Ashoka followed a policy of non-violence both in military organization and foreign policy War, as a means of extension of power, was discarded in favour of moral persuasion Politics was moralised and chastened. This change in the outlook of the emperor weakened the military organization, and perhaps this military weakness might have sapped the very foundation of the far-flung empire

An autocratic government cannot subsist long unless it is backed by highly developed secret services In the reign of Chandragupta there was an elaborate system of espionage Prativedakas or reporters brought imp

underground information to the king. The fear of being discovered faithless to the king made the distant officers loyal to the state

Funds had to be found to maintain such a complete administration as described above Land revenue was the chief source of national income One fourth of the gross produce was charged from the prime producers Besides the land revenue, many other taxes and cesses were levied, namely, tolls on merchandise, duties on imported articles, fees on passports, court fines etc.

Q. 7. Write a note on Megasthenes and his description of India as he saw it

Ans. Megasthenes was the ambassador of Seleukos at the Court of Chandragupta He left behind himself his memoirs (Indicā) which give invaluable information about the people of India Their socio-economic condition and Indian political institution We get interesting description f contemporary India

But from the sociological point of view, his account of India, community life is very valuable. He divides the Indian Community into seven classes. this classification was based on the functions and activities in which the people engaged themselves

At the top of the social hierarchy was a small hand of intellecturals, classed as 'philosophers' by Megasthenes This class consisted Brahmanas and ascetics They were excused from manual labour and taxation. Being highly intelligent, they engaged themselves in solving intricate social, political and religious problems of the time They

helped the state in suggesting progressive measures to promote public interests, they offered their services to private persons who wished to perform religious rites

Next to it comes a class of cultivators or husbandmen who formed the bulk of the population. They cultivated the land which belonged to the king and paid one fourth of the gross product to the State The continuity in their life was undisturbed by any political upheaval or religious revolt They lived a peaceful and contented life They can be labelled as Vaishyas.

Herdsmen and hunters, a third social group, lived a nomadic life They lived on the fringe of the village or town, in forests or on hills Their occupation was that of tending the cattle They corresponded to the shudras of the low class people The state secured their services in destroying beasts and wild animals. The fourth class consisted of traders and artisans They were called Vaishyas They paid taxes to the king Kshatriyas, a class of soldiers, swelled the military and fought for the king They received regular payment from the king even in times of peace

The sixth and seventh class of Megasthenes, manned the state administration and municipal bodies They are government officers, municipal counsellors; spies, judicial officers, and such other people who were engaged by the king for civil administration No orthodox class label could be attached to them. These classes must

Manners and customs of the people were very simple But caste and guild rules were religiously adhered to, nobody could tamper these rules without inviting complete ruination upon himself and his family However, Megasthenes was struck by the honesty and frankness of the people in all walks of life Thefts were uncommon, even when people left their homes unlocked and unguarded Polygamous marriages and even sale of girls were considered normal and natural The custom of satee prevailed in the north-west regions of India In lower castes, divorce could be obtained by mutual consent A woman could remarry if her husband has stayed away from the home for a very long time Serfdom or slavery which was common in Europe during the times

There were many beautiful towns during this period Generally a town was built along the river side on a high plane Big towns were properly fortified by a strong wall which surrounded them Patliputra was a magnificent town built on the meeting place of the Son and the Ganga A strong wall with many towers and gates at intervals surrounded the city In addition, there was a deep ditch which ran round the town Thus, it was very well fortified The king lived in a palacial building surrounded by well-laid parks He lived a most luxuriant life, but he was in constant danger of being assassinated. Every night he changed his bed-room and his palace was well guarded day and night

In short, during the Mauryan period people were hard-working and industrious and land was very fertile There was both peace and prosperity, and people lived a happy and contented life Owing to the unification of India under a very powerful king, irksome trade barriers on internal trade were removed and consequently trade flourished Creative activities are possible only under peaceful and orderly government It is not surprising to that art and literature, sculpture and architecture flourished during the Mauryan period Besides, there were excellent universities at Takshashila, Ujjan and Nalanda It was really a golden period in the history of India

Q 8 Write a short note on religious condition in Mauryan Age

but among the orthodox Brahamana, the Vedic traditions persisted The Bhagavata religion had influenced the Vedic religion Vishnu of the Vedic religion was identified with the Krishna of the Bhagavata religion. The cult of Bhakti was not a sectarian religion, it was open to all.

The Greek writers often refer to the worship of India Heracles and Indian Dionysus. These two gods were none other than Krishna Vasudeva and Shiva The worship of Krishna Vasudeva was prevalent among the Shurasenas on the Jamuna and that of Shiva among the Kshudrakas on the Beas But in the province of Oudh, Bihar and Orissa, the new faiths, namely, Buddhism and

Q 9. Write a short note on the Buddhistic System of Education during the Maurya Period

Ans with the spread of Buddhism, Viharas, Sanghas and monasteries sprang up They served as centres of learning and teaching The monks lived in monasteries and led a simple and intellectual life They were life long bachelors In the Brahminical period, education was a monopoly of the few upper classes, and none could aspire to be a teacher unless he was a Brahman Under the Buddhistic system, there were no restrictions on account of birth and caste To become a pupil, the child had to take the following vows. 'I take refuge in Dhamma' The student should be close-shaven and should put on yellow robe The head should be uncovered A monk who was educated at the Sangha for a period of not less than 10 years could become a teacher

The students studied for about ten years. Grammar, logic, metaphysics and philosophy were taught Besides history, medical science, mathematics, astronomy, arts and crafts and other useful subjects were also taught. Sanskrit, the language of the Brahmans, had not lost its proud position But the most popular medium of instruction was Pali, the language of the Buddhists

Education was not confined to the four walls of the Sangha Since religious literature was written in Prakrit and mainly in Pali, it became easy for an average man to satisfy his thirst for knowledge. The percentage of literate people grew very rapidly Ashoka inscribed his edicts in various provincial languages, which were meant to be read by the common men This fact implies that

degree of proficiency in modelling, chiselling and stone cutting. The Mauryan art was realistic and full of vigour and movements

In literature, there is no outstanding work of high literary merit The most important works of the time are Arthashastra of Chanakya, Jataka-Katha a collection of simple but interesting stories, the Kathavasthu, the Kalpasutra and the Vartika The Kalpasutra is a well-known Jain scripture and its author is supposed to be Bhadrabahu, the head of the Jaina church during the reign of Chandragupta The Vartika is a treatise on grammar and its author is the famous grammarian Katyayana

Q 10 Narrate briefly the causes of the decline and fall of the Mauryan Empire

Ans With the addition of Kalinga on the south-east during the reign of Ashoka, the Mauryan empire embraced almost the whole of India It extended from Himalaya in the north to the borders of the Tamil States in the south In the North-west, its border reached as far as Afghanistan, and in the east, the whole of Bengal was under the rule of the Maurya Kings When means of communications were not very swift and speedy, it would be difficult to govern such an unwieldy empire as that of the Mauryas The fall of the Mauryan Empire was inherent in its vastness and range After the death of Ashoka, distant provinces which were seething with discontent asserted their independence

When Kingship is hereditary and when the king is the central figure in the administration of an empire, the accession of a weak king would bring in the downfall of

the empire The successors of Ashoka did not possess the powerful personality of their predecessors, and their weakness furthered the fall of the empire Also, the Maurya empire was divided between the two grandsons of Ashoka, namely, Dasaratha and Samprati This division weakened the strength and solidarity of the empire and finally proved fatal

In some measure, Ashoka's rejection of physical force as a means of maintaining empire intact resulted in weakening the chains which bound the distant and far-flung provinces into a well-knit empire The Law of Piety killed the martial spirit of the army and thus removed the cause of fear from the discontented provinces Thus the peaceful policy of Ashoka impaired the efficiency of the administration Besides, by accepting the faith of Buddhism as a state religion, Ashoka alienated the sympathy of the Brahmana who were very powerful as a class. The discontented Brahmanas speeded the decline of the Maurya Empire.

And lastly came the invasions by the Indo-Greek Kings who were establishing themselves into independent Kings on the north-west frontier of India on the ruins of the mighty Syrian Empire of Alexander

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CHAPTER VIII

THE SUNGAS, ANDHRAS AND FOREIGN RULERS.

Q. 1. Give the main theories relating to the Sungas and assess their position in ancient Indian History

Ans. History repeats itself Just as the Maurya Dynasty was founded by Chandragupta by dethroning and assassinating the last Nanda King, in the same way the last Maurya King was murdered by his own Commander in Chief Pushyamitra Sunga, the founder of the Sunga Dynasty at Magadha. Pushyamitra hailed from a Brahmana family and his dynasty ruled Magadha for 112 years (185–72 B C)

The Sungas claimed themselves as the descendants of Bharadvaja, the royal priest of Divodasa the king of the Tritsus Having captured Pataliputra, the capital of Magadha, Pushyamitra established his rule over the central parts of the former Magadha Empire The Mauryan Empire was completely disintegrated In the south and south–east the Andhras and the Kalingas had established their own independent Kingdoms In the central parts of India, the new dynasty of the Sungas had come to power The only region which remained in the hands of the later Mauryan Kings was Kashmir and its surrounding territory

In the south Pushyamitra's empire extended as far as the river Narbada, and in the north–east as far as Sialkot in the Punjab Like Chandragupta, Pushyamitra, had enemies, both internal and foreign He had to face foreign invasion during the latter part of his reign

Menander, the king of Kabul and the Punjab, invaded India and succeeded in annexing Saurasthra and the Indus delta to his Kingdom Later on, he came so near as Patliputra and beseiged the city Pushyamitra gave a savage resistance and ultimately succeeded in routing the foreign hordes

Kharavela, the third King of the Cheta (or Chaitya) dynasty, was a powerful king of Kalinga. He began to stretch his western border. He invaded the territory of Satakarni and subdued the Rashtrikas, Rajgriha and Bharatvarsha came under his rule and he prepared to attack Pushyamitra, the powerful king of Magadha. Pushyamitra's defeat crowned the glory of Kalinga and its King Kharavela. But the dynasty came to decay after the death of Kharavela

While Pushyamitra was facing the two hostile enemies in Menander and Kharavela, his Crown-Prince Agnimitra at Vidisa humbled the King of Vidarbha. The famous play Malavikagnimitra by Kalidasa alludes to this incident

Later on, Pushyamitra desired to establish his claim to paramount power. To claim paramount power, he performed the rite of Ashvamedha The successful performance of this rite indicated that all other powers accepted his claim Pushyamitra sent his grandson Vasumitra in charge of the horse He defeated the Yavanas who challenged the claim of Pushyamitra.

The accession of a Brahmana king over the throne of Magadha marks a revival of the Brahmanical religion. The ceremony of the Ashvamedha indicates the return of Brahmanas Pushyamitra was a fanatical

Brahmanical religion and he headed the powerful militant Brahmanic reaction Animal sacrifices were re-established and the codes of non-violence (Ahimsa) were flagrantly violated during his regime. The Buddhist traditions describe him as a persecutor of the faith of Buddhism and its followers It is said that Pushyamitra destroyed the monasteries and slayed their monks The Buddhist monks had to flee from Magadha in search of a safe shelter But there is no evidence for this traditional story

After Pushyamitra, Agnimitra ruled Magadha, he shifted capital from Patliputra to Vidisa of which formerly he was the viceroy Vasumitra succeeded his father Agnimitra He earned the name of a powerful king After the defeat of the Indo-Greek rulers at the hands of Vasumitra a friendly alliance between the former enemies was formed The Besnagar inscriptions show that the Indo-Greek kings of Takshashila sent a permanent embassy to the court of Vasumitra

The successors of Vasumitra were puppets in the hands of their Brahmani ministers The last Sunga King, Devabhuti, was assassinated in 80 B C by his Brahmana minister Kanva Vasudeva founded the Kanva Dynasty at Magadha

The Brahmanical religion started its revival during the Sunga period. This period is known in history for its excellence in arts and crafts The wonderful relics of this period are found at Barhut and Sanchi, The defeat of the Indo-Greek kings indicate high military powers of the Sunga Kings

Q. 2. Describe the political and cultural activities of the Andhras

Ans The 'Andhra people' are mentioned in the Aitareya Brahmana and this reference shows the antiquity of these people Megasthenes also mentioned them as the "powerful Andhra people" The Andhra dynasty, according to the Purana, included thirty kings whose rule lasted for about four centuries and a half During the rule of Chandragupta Maurya, the Andhras lived between the Godavari and the Krishna rivers These Andhra Kings during the Maurya period possessed a powerful military, and their power was second only to the Maurya's With the decline of the Mauryan empire, they extended their dominions They conquered the whole of the Deccan and reached as far as Patliputra They are also known as Satavahanas or Satakarnis

Simuka was the founder of the Satavahana or Satakarni Dynasty about two centuries before the birth of Christ It was during the rule of Simuka and his younger brother and successor that the entire Deccan was brought under the Andhra Kingdom The third king Satakarni I was a contemporary of Pushyamitra and of Kharavela of Kalinga He is mentioned in the inscription of Kharavela of Kalinga, as "lord of the west" He married a Maratha princess Nagarika. After conquering Western Malva with its capital Ujjain, he performed the horse–sacrifice His capital was 'Pratishthana' in the state of Hyderabad With the decline of the Sungas, Eastern Malva with its capital Vidhisa came under the rule of the Satakarni dynasty

Nothing is known about this dynasty for a period of one hundred and fifty years At about
Andhra King killed Susarman, the last kin

dynasty and occupied some parts of Northern India It is believed that the Saka rulers droved away the Andhra rulers from the Western as well as Northern India. The struggle for domination in the Northern India and Western Malva was continuging among the Indo-Greek kings, the Sakas, the Parthians (Pahlwas) and the Andhra kings But till first century after Christ, the Andhras were on the decline

The 17th king of this dynasty was Hala He composed a book 'Sapta-Sataka' in Marathi Prakrit He and his successors gave protection to the Hindus against the attacks of the foreigners who had settled in Malva. Early in the first century A D Gautamiputra Satakarni, the 23rd king of the dynasty, revived the ancient power of the Andhra people He described himself as the destroyer of the Sakas and the Pahlvas The probable date of his accession is 106 A D

From the inscription of his mother Bala Sri, we learn hat his kingdom included Gujarat, Malvy, portions of tral India, Berar, and the country round Poona and Nasik. He was a patron of Brahmana and called himself 'the Unique Brahmana" The pride of the Kshatriya class was humbled by him He gave large sums of money both to the Brahmanas and the Buddhists His rule lasted for a out 25 years.

Vashithiputra Pulumayi succeeded him He was twice defeated by Rudradaman, the Saka Satrap of Ujjain His reign ended in 155 A D, yet once more the Satvahana dynasty was destined to play an important role. Some fifteen years later, Shri Yajna Satakarni occupied the throne He was the last and one of the most powerful

Andhra Kings His rule lasted from 166 to 196 A D. He recovered all the provinces which Pulumayi had lost to the Saka rulers In third century this ancient dynasty came to an end The Andhra Kingdom was divided among a number of new dynasties, namely Abhiras, Kadambas and also the Saka and the Pahlava rulers

The inscriptions of the Andhra period inform us about the social and economic conditions and also the religion of the times The Andras adopted Hinduism as a State religion. But the three faiths of Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism existed side by side without any interference from the State On the contrary, the monarch gave large endowment to Buddhism as well as Hinduism. The old vedic sacrifices were revived by them and the kings performed the horse-sacrifice according to the ancient Brahmanical tradition During this period many foreigners like the Sekas and the Yavanas embraced the Hindu religion or Buddhism.

The Andhra kings were the patrons of Prakrit literature. The 17th King Hala was a writer and composed his 'Sapta-Sataka' in Marathi Prakrit Trade and commerce flourished. Ptolemy also had come to know about the glory of the Andhra kings of his time.

The empire was divided into 'Janapadas' governed by amatyas and feudatories More than this we know very little about the political conditions. As for the social life the community was divided into classes according to occupations and professions The elite class who manned the state administration was ranked topmost, while the manual workers were classed in the lowest category. Besides, these people knew the use of gold, silv

copper for minting coins Most of the cave-monasteries such as those at Nasik, Kanneri etc were built during the Andhra period.

Q 3 Write a critical note on Indo-Greek Kings,

Ans. With the decay in the Syrian empire founded by Alexandar the Great, small states which were founded on the ruins of the Syrian Empire were pushing themselves in the north-west frontier of India, since during this period, the Mauryan empire had weakened its hold over the north-west provinces The Indo-Greek kings or the Indo-Bactrians extended their rule over the north-western regions of India Our source of information about these Kings is the coins which have been discovered These coins bear the name of Indo-Greek Kings Thanks to their rule in India for about 200 years, there was a close association of Hellenic culture and Hindu culture

About the year 188 B C Demetrios the fourth kind f Bactria invaded the north-west provinces of India Ie established his rule in Afghanistan, Sind and West Punjab and styled himself as the king of India During his stay in India, a revolt against him broke out in Bectria and Eukratides The leader of the revolt established himself as the king of Bactria But later on he was assasinated by his son After the death of Demetrius, the entire kingdom of Bactria, including the Indian Dominions were parcelled, and these small units were ruled by the descendants of either Eukratides or Demetrios

Amongst these Indo-Greek Kings, the most important was Menader. In about 155 B C he further penetrated in the border of India and conquered Saurashtra,

Mathura and Sakata (Sialkot) His advances over the Magadha were checked by Vasumitra, the grandson of Pushyamitra He made Sakala his capital and ruled from that flourishing trade centre In Buddhist tradition, he is known as Milanda Curious to know more about Buddhism, says the Buddhist tradition, he embraced the faith of Buddhism His questions and answers given by Nagasena, the Buddhist scholar are recorded in a valuable work known as 'Milinda Panha'

Antialkidas, another prominent Indo-Greek king, was the ruler of Takshashila between 140 to B C He was the follower of Bhagavata religion He sent his ambassador Heliodoros to the court of Shunga King at Vidisha Helidoros erected a monolithic monument in honour of Vasudeva, the god of gods

About 135 B C these Indo-Greek kings lost Bactria, their home-land, to the Sakas who were a powerful nomadic tribe But they continued to rule over India for about two centuries, during which period 30 kings and queens ruled the frontier provinces With the raids of the Kushans, their dynasty came to an end

Living on the Indian soil for a very long period, the Indo-Greek kings in the latter part of their rule were Indianised and were absorbed in the Hindu Society They professed Hindu faiths and bore Hindu names The traces of Hellenistic influence on the contemporary Buddhist art of Gandhara have been discovered.

Q 4 Write a short notes on (1) The Parthians and (2) The Sakas.

Ans. Parthia which was a dominion of Alexander lay to the South-East of the Caspian Sea Along with

a nomadic life, they went westward in search of fresh pasture lands On their way, the Yuch-chi met the tribe of the Wu-sun whom they overpowered. Ultimately they reachead the land of the Sakas and drove them away from Bactria which the Sakas had captured from the Yavanas, the Indo-Greek King Before the Yuch-chi could settle down in their new-found home, they were attacked by the Wu-sun who defeated them Consequently, the Yuch-chi once again continued their search for a new homeland Finally they settled in the fertile valley of Oxus and began to live a settled life Here they split themselves into five groups, each had its independent settlement One of these tribes was called Kushana

The chief of the Kushana tribe established his supremacy over the remaining tribes and declared himself the monarch of the whole nation under the name of Kadphises I Having once lived a nomadic existence, these virile and warlike people began to press themselves all direction, about the middle of the first century A D They defeated the Greeks and subdued the Parthians and thus occupied the provinces of Kabul and Kandhar During the regime of Kadphises I, the Kushan empire swelled from the Parthian frontier to the east of the Indus

Kadphises I was succeeded by his son Vima Kadphises or Kadphises II Many scholars think that the Saka Era of 78 A D was founded by him He annexed the North-West provinces whose rulers were Saka-Phalve kings His empire in the east extended as far as Benares and in the south as far as the Narbada While Rudradaman and his successors, the Satraps of Malwa and Kathiawar,

accepted his over lordship There is one blemish in his military achievements He was defeated by Pan Chas, a Chinese general at the close of the first century A D Kadphises II died in 110 A D.

Kadphises II was succeeded by Kanishka The date of his accession is uncertain Sir John Marshall and Dr Smith reject the thesis that he ascended the throne in 78 A D and that he was the founder of the Saka Era His accession was delayed by ten years, as he did not belong to the main line of descendants He was crowned in 120 A D and ruled for more than forty years During his rule, he added a fresh chapter to Indian history

He continued the tradition of the Kushana rulers of aggression and conquests He conquered Kashmir and reached as far as the capital of Magadha. He led a successful military expedition through the Pamir mountains over China He received from the Chinese Khasgar and Khotan, and returned with a few Chinese hostages to India This military expedition earned him the title of a great military genius

But Kanishka was not merely a soldier He built a magnificent relic tower and a monastery in honour of the lord Buddha in the city of Peshawar which was his Indian capital (Peshawar was then known as Purushapur) Purushapura remained a centre of learning and culture for centuries Later on he built Kanishkapura in Kashmir It is said he was killed by his own officers. When he died, his rule extended from Gandhara and Kashmir to Benares in the East, and Sind and Kathiawar in the South His foreign possessions include Afghanistan and the Chinese Turkestan

The rule of Kanishka is remembered both for his military exploits as well as for his contribution to the spread of Buddhism in India as well as abroad. Like Ashoka, he patronised the religion and like him, he convened a council of the Buddhist monks at Kashmir. The aim behind convening this council was to settle the the disputes pointed in the religion Vasumitra presided over the council and Asvagosha was present during the discussions An authorised version of Buddhist scriptures took shape at the council, and the results of the discussions were engraved on copper plates to bury which Kanishka got built a stupa. As a result of the deliberations in the council, a revised doctrine of Buddhism was issued, and this doctrine is known Mahayana or the "Great Vehicle" as against the older one–Hinayana or the "Lesser Vehicle". This new form of the Buddhist religion spread to Tibet, China and Japan

Though a devout Buddhist like Ashoka, like him, he also was not a bigot or a fanatical follower of the faith of Buddhism From the coins which he issued during his regime, it is clear that he was tolerant of all the other faiths, which flourished in his time. The worship of different gods–Greek, Zorostrian, Babylonian, and Hindu–was prevalent in his capital Perhaps, his personal religion might be a mixture of all these faiths

There is one more point of comparison between Ashoka and Kanishka Like him, he was a great patron of art, literature and other creative activities The fact that Vasumitra, Asvagosha, Nagarjuna, Parsva and Charaka–these eminent writers and philosophers–visited his court indicates the versatile genius of the host His

regime saw all-round progress in art, literature, science, medicine and philosophy Moreover Kanishka was a great builder. He built the relic tower and a monastery at his capital, Kanishkapur, a town in Mathura by erecting beautiful statues and monolithic columns A new school of Sculpture came into existence at Gandhara during his regime. The new school was known either as the Gandhara school of sculpture or Indo-Greek art, It was known by the latter name because the influence of the Greek form was evident on the contemporary art

In short, Kanishka was the greatest of the Kushana Kings Not only did he expand his empire but also he associated himself with the cultural activities of his time His active association with art and architecture of the time as well as his broad-based tolerant attitude to all the medley of religion faiths earned him the title of 'second Ashoka, though unlike Ashoka, he was essentially a man of sword

The coins discovered at Mathura, Sravasti and Sarnath at Benares have led historians to conclude that Kanishka respected all the different faiths The coins bore the figures of different gods and goddesses of the Greeks, the Hindus, and the Iranians and also the image of Buddha

Q. 6 Write what you know about the revival of Brahminism in this age. (200 B. C to 310 A. D.)

Ans During the Maurya period, the Brahmanical religion had reached its lowest ebb Buddhism with the patronage of the Maurya kings spread far and wide But with the passage of time Buddhism lost its vir[illegible] nd missionary zeal, and the Buddhist monks were p[illegible]

with the aggrandizement of their position, besides the religion sought seclusion of the monasteries. So with the decline of the Mauryan Empire and the Political confusion that set in, conditions became ripe for a new cultural and religious synthesis.

The discontented Brahmana during the latter Maurya period found a leader in Pushyamitra who was a Brahmin by caste He headed the Brahmanical reaction and resurrected the vedic sacrifices Pushyamitra performed the Ashvamedha (horse-sacrifice) to celebrate his claim to paramountcy Later on, Shri Satkarni, the Andhra King, performed the great vedic yajnas Besides, he was a devout follower of the Bhagvata religion and worshipped Vasudeva

Kadphises II and Vasudeva of the Kushana Dynasty had accepted the Hindu gods and worshipped Shiva and Vasudeva Rudradaman, the Saka-Pahlva king of Malva, was a great patron of Brahmana and so also Gondopharnes But the significant point about these foreign rulers was their qualified acceptance of Hinduism They completely rejected the rites and sacrifices from their worship of Hindu gods They rather accepted the Bhakti cult of the Bhagavata religion. Owing to the impact of foreign culture, both Hinduism and Buddhism had to make adjustments, and further had to restate their doctrines to be suitable to new social conditions

Buddhism and Jainism also received state patronage Menander-the Indo-Greek king embraced the faith of Buddhism, while Kheravala, the king of Kalinga, was a patron of Jainism This period witnessed the split in Jainism, and two sects of Swetambara and Digambara

emerged Jainas also modified their original faith as preached by Mahavir. From Hinduism, they took the idol form of worship, and built temples with the statues of their gods and goddesses From Magadha, the birth place of Jainism, it shifted to Mathura and Western India

Even Buddhism was reformed and recasted so as to incorporate in itself those thought-current which had greatest appeal to a large section of the people. In the first instance the reformist tendencies were heading for a break-away from the orthodox elements Kanishka of of the Kushan Dynasty convened a council of all leading Buddhist monks to settle the points of differences in the religion. From the deliberations emerged a revised doctrines of Buddhism Known as Mahayana as against Hinayana which did not appreciate any deviation from the original tenets as formulated by Buddha himself. Mahayana means Greater wheel and Hinayana the Lesser wheel The Mahayana form of Buddhism went abroad and flourished in Tibet and China, while the Hinayana form persists in Ceylon, Burma and Siam

In the revised doctrines of Buddhism, i. e in the Mahayana form of Buddhism, Buddha was looked upon as god or king among gods Not only he ceased to be a human being, but rituals were evolved in the worship of this god Due to the influence of the Bhakti-cult; (the cult of Devotion), the idea of a personal saviour was incorporated in Buddhism Being a god, he must have agents on the earth, they were called Bodhisattvas (men who were Buddhas in the making), and they brought grace from Lord Buddha to save the sinners Besides the

images of Buddha in stone were cast This concept of personal god who would save the sinner by his grace was against the fundamental tenet of Buddhism which preached complete self-reliance Thus Buddhism came very near to the Vedic religion and was absorbed by it in due course

It is in the fitness of things to call this period "a period of regeneration, of readjustments and of reformation" All the main sects of India namely, Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism had to restate their doctrines and to vitalise them by making them broad-based and tolerant. Brahminism, recast and restated, is known as Hinduism, while Buddhism and Jainism were drawing nearer to Hinduism to such an extent that they were ultimately absorbed in Hinduism

Q. 7. Describe the various schools of arts and architecture which flourished during this period (200 B. C to 310 A. D)

Ans This period made a distinct progress in art over the art of the Maurya Age Ashoka built massive pillars with capital in various animal figures Thus the Mauryan art was physical and material It was impressive because of its size and massiveness The sculpture representing animal figures aimed at truthful and realistic presentation The art of the Shunga, the Satavahana, the Indo-Greek, the Scythians and the Kushan period primarily makes an appeal to the senses, the art, though not less realistic and physical, is sensuous Of course, the themes, the subject-matter were chosen from the life and philosophy of Buddha and the aim or the objective of the artists was to edify, to appeal to the moral sense through association, but in the presentation of those

themes, the artists failed to convey the spiritual values, the appeal was more directed to the senses and less to the mind, or the soul In short art of this period was realistic and sensuous

During this period, various schools of art sprang up The principal among them were (1) the Bharhut, (2) the Sanchi, (3) the Mathura, (4) the Gandhara, and (5) the Amaravati

The only surviving specimen of the Bharhut school of art is a part of the red–stone railing which surrounded the stupa .The scenes from the life of Buddha in symbols are engraved Also the Jataka stories are expressed in stone The sculptural representation of the above themes reflects the contemporary life and the various faiths, The art is sensuous

From the relics discovered from Sanchi in the Bhopal State, we find that though similar themes were used, the artists paid greater attention to technical details and the execution appears to be more advanced

At Mathura, railing with sculpture and detached images of Buddha in human form are found, Since the Buddhists did not believe in idol worship, they were against the idea of making an image of Buddha They presented the life and philosophy of Buddha only through symbols e g , a wheel Thus, it seems a first attempt is made at Mathura to convey spiritual values through the images of gods and goddesses of perfect human beings. Thus a distinct progress was made over the previous schools

But the most important school was that of the Gandhara which flourished at Takshashila, the capital of

the Gandhara province Gandhara was a meeting place of Greeks, the Chinese and the Indians The contemporary art was aiming at synthesis of these various influences By this time the Mahayana School of Buddhism was acquiring importance both at home and abroad. Idol worship was admitted in the Mahayan sect Thus the Gandhara school aimed at depicting the life of Buddha through images in the human form In doing so it relied upon the Greek style of representation While making the statue of Buddha, greater attention was paid to human anatomy The poise, balance and symmetry were conciously attempted In matter of dress and poise, Greek art was consciously imitated But the final product was essentially Indian

At Amaravati, relics in marble have been discovered

The architectural achievements of this period consist of caves which were dug out of the hard rock for the benefit of those who wanted seclusion They were valuable centres of learning and culture

Q. 8. Describe the literary condition of this period (200 B C to 320 A D)

Ans No coherent picture of the literary activities of this long period is visible But during this period eminent dramatists, physicians, philosophers were born and they are revered even to-day.

With the fall of the Mauryan empire, there was a resurgence of Brahmanism and their language–Sanskrit. There was a revival of interest in the old vedic philosophy, and Brahmanical literature. Sanskrit became the language of the cultured people Both Brahmanas and

Buddhists used Sanskrit as a medium in place of Prakrits namely Pali, Ardhamagadhi etc

Owing to the efforts of grammarians, Sanskrit had become more enriched and flexible The old stories were recast in this new language The Mahabharat and the Ramayan were becoming very popular. Stories, dramas and poetry were composed in Sanskrit.

Notable Grammarians of this period are Katyayana and Patanjali Vrittikas of Katyayana is a commentary on the works of Panini, the eminent grammarian of the Brahminical period His criticisms of Panini are answered by Patanjali in his Mahabhashya. During the reign of Kanishka of the Kushan dynasty, Asvasgosha was a frequent visitor of the former's court at Peshawar He was an eminent Sanskrit poet and was appointed Vice-President of the Buddhist council convened by Kanishka His field of activities included religion, music, debate and composition of dramas He wrote Buddhacharitra depicting *the life of Buddha* His contemporaries were Kumarlata, the author of Kalpanamandi, and Aryasura, the author of Jatakmala, a collection of stories Bhasa, the eminent Sanskrit dramatist, flourished in this period His famous Svapnavasavadatta relates the romantic story of King Udayana.

Besides the works of pure literary merit, works on science, medicine and astronomy were also composed during this period. Nagarajuna, the friend of the king Pulumayi, popularized the Mahayana faith He introduced the Tantrika rites among the follc Buddhism. was a magician, physician and

Ayurveda medicine and surgery. Charaka and Susruta were authorities on the Ayurveda system of medicine The Charaka-samhita covers the entire field of medical science. Garga was the famous author of Garga-sanhita a treatise on astronomy. Bharata composed Natyashastra the science and art of dramatics. He deals there with poetics from which were developed later Rasa, aesthetics Vatsyayana composed Kamasutra-the art and science of pleasure.

CHAPTER IX

THE GUPTAS

Q 1. Trace the origin of the Guptas.

Ans. The rise of the Gupta power marks a new chapter in the Indian history With it ends the dark period of the 3rd century, and the difficulties arising from the absence of recorded events of historical importance disappear, because with the beginning of the Gupta power a consistent and clear history can be constructed from the abundant authentic data It is possible to date the historical events during the Gupta power .

However, little reliable is known about the ancestors of the founder of the Gupta Dynasty The Guptas might not have descended from any high lineage Perhaps they ruled the land near Patliputra, and on the ruins of the Kushan dynasty when political anarchy prevailed in the Northern India, the small powers of the Gupta enlarged their dominion and, thus, they were able to establish themselves as an important power Ghatotkacha, a Gupta king, donned the title of Maharaja.

But according to Jayaswal and Ray Chaudhary, with the decline of the Kushan dynasty, there was no political chaos but there existed two powerful kingdoms of Bharshivas and Vakatakas in succession in the Northern India. These two kings embraced and encouraged the Brahmanical religion The Gupta kings carried this tradition and the Brahminical religion of Hinduism reached its zenith during the Gupta period From this continuity in the

development of religion, the two Indian historians infer that the Gupta regime was a mere continuity of political power

Ghatotkacha's son Chandragupta I ascended the throne, and he married a Lichchavi Princess Kumardevi The Lichchavis had a very long ancestry, the ancient family of Lichchvis was ruling Vaisali during the earlier part of Buddhism The matrimonial relationship with such an ancient and powerful group was of great political significance This matrimonial alliance unlimited opportunities for political expansion for Chandragupta

Now Chandragupta styled himself Maharajadhiraj Also, during his regime coins bore the name of the Lichchavis as well as Gupta's From the above facts, it is inferred that Chandragupta inherited the Lichchavi Kingdom through marriage

Lichchavis greatly aided the Guptas in the early stage of their struggle for imperial power The name of Lichchavis was given much importance during the Gupta period, and Samudragupta proudly declared himself as "The Son of the Daughter of the Lichchavis".

Chandragupta I declared himself as an Emperor of Arvavarta and he founded the Gupta Era from the day of his accession in the year 320 A D His empire included Bihaar, Oudh and the Gangetic valley

Chandragupta's regime made a remarkable innovation with the issue of golden coins bearing the figures of a woman i e Kumardevi the Lichchavi Princess Perhaps this innovation indicates how much Chandragupta was indebted to his wife Kumar Devi and to the Lichchavis for his political eminence

Q. 2. Dascribe the career, achievements and character of Samudragupta Attempt an estimate of of his greatness

Ans Kumardevi's son Samudragupta was one of the ablest and most versatile rulers that India has known. He ascended the throne at about 335 A D and ruled for about 40 years He was a first class warrior, a good organizer and a profound scholar He started his political career with conquests and aggression. Like Ashoka he had to fight for his claim to the throne He cherished the dream of restoring the glory and greatness of Magadha as under the Mauryas during his own rule Like the Mauryas, he desired to establish his claim to supremacy and suzerainty of India, "His rivals were divided into four classes according to his treatment of them · (1) Kings who weve slain by him and whose kingdoms were incorporated into his dominions, (2) Kings who were defeated and taken prisoner, but reinstated as tributaries, (3) Frontier kings who seem voluntarily to have paid some kind of homage to the victor, and (4) Kings of more distant monarchies, who might have felt the force of his arms and who certainly seemed to have shown some recognition to his rise to power "

He conquered the small kingdoms in Northern India and annexed them to his Some of these kings were Rudradeva, Nagarsena and Nandi Later on, he turned his attention to "the kings of the forest country " But these kings accepted his overlordship, paid him the customary tribute and governed their kingdoms - his subordinates

Later on, he started his Herculean expedition to the south His Deccan campaign was the most adventurous military experiment in history He started along the eastern coast and reached Madras after defeating all the small and big kings on his way. Among the defeated kings were Mahendra of Kosala and Mantraraja of kerala –to mention only two among the others Then he conquered Vasugupta, king of Kanchi and others who offered resistance to him. Then he returned to his capital through the western districts of the Deccan Enroute he defeated the Marathas. This famous military campaign lasted for nearly three years and he returned to his capital with camels loaded with gold Dr R. C Majumdar makes the following observation about this expedition : "The march along the coast suggests a joint operation by the navy " He infers thereby that Samudragupta possessed a powerful navy

Out of political sagacity, he did not impose his ·le over all these defeated kings and was satisfied on accepting a heavy tribute from them

The Small frontier kings were frightened into acceptance of his paramountcy Voluntarily they seem to have paid tribute and homage to him These kingdoms were as follows . Samatata (Part of East Bengal) Kamarupa (Assam), and Nepal. Besides the republics of Abhiras and Malvas also accepted his suzerainty.

The military fame of Samudragupta spread far and wide The distant foreign rulers coveted his friendship and sent him rich presents, and embassies Among other diplomatic relations, those with Kushana kings

and the Saka rulers of the north-west India were more prominent Besides, Meghavarman the king of Ceylon sent an embassy to him to secure his permission to built a monastery at Bodhi Gaya for Buddhist pilgrims from Ceylon Along with embassy, he sent rich gifts as a token of friendship

Having become the king of an extensive empire which embraced the whole of Aryavarta, following the Hindu tradition he performed the horse-sacrifice (Ashvamedha)

Estimate The military records of Ssmudragupta are said to be unique and incomparable in Indian history. He is rightly compared with the celebrated emperors like Napoleon, Ashoka and Akbar Once again he established political unity in India, and his extensive military conquests both in Aryavarta and in the Deccan secured for him a safe place among the celebrated military geniuses of the world He was a courageous soldier, efficient organiser and diplomatic statesman. His statesmanship is reflected in his treatment of the distant kings whom he overpowered Knowing the limitation of his power and capacity, he did not impose his Government upon them but he remained satisfied by their acceptance of his overlordship over them and permitted them to enjoy their hereditary privileges. Moreover, he did not disturb the frontier kings when they voluntarily paid him homage, and maintained diplomatic relations with the rulers who were the neighbours of India. Like Chandragupta, his administration of such an extensive

well organised and efficient and the empire remained intact for a century after his death,

He was a man of wide culture He was above the narrow distinctions of caste and creed Harishena, his famous court poet, depicts him as a celebrated poet and musician That this is not an exaggerated statement is proved by the existence of coins which show him playing a lyre Further the matrical composition on the coins of his period indicate that he was an accomplished poet In shastras he was equally well-versed His court was attended by men of learning and letters whose company he valued highly. He patronised Brahminical religion and his inscriptions were composed in elegant Sanskrit Harishena, his famous court poet and Vasubandhu, the famous Buddhist writer, were members of his court He worshipped Vishnu and revived the ancient Ashvamedha.

After a glorious rule of more than 40 years, he breathed his last in 375 A D.

Q 3. Sketch the career of Chandragupta II

Ans Samudragupta had many sons but he nominated Chandragupta II as his successor The latter ascended the throne in 375 A D. and assumed the tittle of Vikramaditya of Ujjan of the famous "men's gem" But modern researches have disproved this identification On the contrary, the famous Vikramaditya of Ujjain was the king of Malva about the first century B C

Having inherited the military genius of his father and grandfather, he began his rule with conquest and expansion He defeated the local chief of Bengal and attacked the Saka rulers known as the western staraps He annexed the fertile lands of Malwa, Gujarat and Kathiawar

The conquest of their western India completed the process of unification of the Northern India which was initiated by his grandfather Further owing to this annexation, he extended his Western Frontier to the Arabian Sea–access to which gave an impetus to foreign as well as internal trade He also crossed the indus and defeated the Vahilikas who had setteled themselves on the Western Punjab

He shifted his capital from Patliputra to Ayodhya, and Ujjain became the second capital after the conquest of Western India Ujjain was a trade junction and became a centre of culture

Chandragupta II was a Vaishnava (i e. Parma Bhagavata) by faith but like all the Guptas he was tolerant towards other sects and religions Religion did not interfere with his administration He appointed followers of different religions as his ministers and military officers His minister for Peace and War was a follower of Shiva, while his general Amrakadeva was a Buddhist But inspite of encouragement to Buddhism, its followers were falling in number and Hinduism was becoming very prominent and widespread

Chandragupta II was no doubt a great king Though he was a soldier of proved merits, he was no less an admirer of art and literature It is believed that the famous Kavi Kalidas lived in this period The people were enjoying the benefits of an orderly and prosperous government. That is why there is a shift of our attention from the achievements of the king to the cultural activities that were flowing during his regime, Hindu renaissance was developing its various phases In short, he was a

ruler of people who were happy, prosperous and cultured Chandragupta died in 413 A D.

Q. 4. Give an account of the salient features of the reigns of Kumargupta, Skandagupta and their followers.

Ans Chandragupta's son Kumargupta ascended the throne in 413 A D In the beginning of his rule, there was a peace and prosperity in his empire He was able to keep intact the heritage of his predecessors Like his predecessors he also followed the policy of religious toleration and gave encouragement to literary, cultural and intellectual activities He performed the horse sacrifice (Ashwamedha) Gold coins were used as currency

Now commenced the gradual decay of the vast Gupta empire, though the Gupta dynasty lasted till the 7th century, Puragupta who succeeded Skandgupta ruled for about six years. He restored the currency to its previous value With the death of Pura–gupta, the Gupta power became very small and played no decisive role in history

Q. 4 What do you mean by the 'Golden Age of the Guptas ?' Describe critically the intellectual, social, political and religious conditions of India in the Gupta Age.

Ans. The period from 320 to 488 A D which comprises the reigns of Chandragupta and his successors upto Skandgupta is called in Indian History 'The Golden Age' or the Augustan Age of Indian History The latter title is given to it for its literary activities It is also said that 'the Gupta period is in the annals of classical India almost what the Periclean Age is in the history of Greece '

The Gupta period which lasted for about two centuries was unique period of peace and prosperity in India Bennett compares this age with the Periclean age of Athens. Under Periclea's guidance, Athens made rapid progress in various fields of arts and sciences The age is noteworthy for its intellectual activities and progress in sculpture and architecture In short, the period witnesses all–round development in cultural activities and hence Athens, in those days, had been the centre of light and learning The Gupta period could boast of more achievements in every field of human activity and hence rightly deserves the title of the "Golden Age"

Religion .

It is claimed that the Gupta rulers played a prominent role in the revival of Hinduism, and the Gupta period is called an age of Hindu renaissance There is no denying the fact that the Gupta rulers preferred Hindu forms of worship and that at least three kings celebrated Hindu forms of worship and that at least three kings celebrated the horse-sacrifice according to Vedic traditions It must be admitted that the Hindu religion came unto its former stature during the reigns of the Gupta period But to call the Gupta period an age of Hindu renaissance is to put wrong construction upon the facts and, hence, is misleading Even during the Maurya period Hinduism had never lost its independent existence With the decline of the Maurya dynasty, Hinduism was again acquiring gradually its former importance We witnessed the revival of Hinduism even before the Gupta period began On the contrary Buddhism and Jainism, according to Fa-hien, flourished side by side The central note of religion under the Guptas is the spirit of toleration State never interfered in the religious matter, nor was there any special consideration given to the followers of a particular religion in state administration The people of the Gupta age were of cosmopolitan culture and were less characterised by fanaticism of religious faith Among them were the Hindus, the Buddhists, the Jainas, the shaivities and the Vaishnavities Besides this, the Bhakti cult i e the religion Every religion was adorned with a rich mythology People worshipped Hindu gods such as Vishnu, Shiva and other big and small deities The Jaina and Buddhist saints and prophets became the

objects of adoration and devotion. Each man respected the other's faith, and human religions were governed by love and tolerance

Literature

Compositions of high literary value and universal merit characterise the Gupta Age The dramatic literature of this age is comparable to the Elizabethan literature.

During this period, Sanskrit reached its hall-mark It became the state language and the official documents and inscriptions were written in Sanskrit The literary output of the period was composed in Sanskrit The greatest and the master dramatist Kalidasa lived in this age His monumental literary work consisted of several famous dramas, lyrics and Kavyas (poems) The Shakuntala, the Malavikagnimitra and the Vikramorvashiya are his famous dramas, while the Ritisamhar and the Meghaduta are the universally acclaimed lyrics, and the Raghuvamsha and the Kumara Sambhava are his two kavyas. The drama of Shakuntala has survived age and tastes, and has acquired world fame even in the translated version The literary perfection of Kalidasa was the perfection of the age

Bharvi was another literary personality of the time He composed "Kiratajuniya". "Mudrarakshasa" which depicts the early period of the Maurya age was composed by Visakhadatta Harisena, the poet laureate of Samudragupta, adorned the court of his master Vasubandhu the famous Buddhist writer, belonged to this age. The Puranas and the Manusmriti were given the final during this age

Art and Architecture .

The age did not confine its activities only to creative literature Science and mathematics made great strides Aryabhatta, the famous mathematician and Varahamitra, the great astronomer adorned this age The part of the credit for the flowering and fruition of cultural activities during this age goes to the Gupta rulers who were cultured persons and hence patronized literally the art and the artists The various arts, namely, architecture, sculpture, music and painting flourished during this age under the fostering care of the artminded Gupta rulers Samudragupta's love for music is well-known Besides, the statues at Sarnath, sculpture on the walls of the temples of the Gupta period and the frescoes of Ajanta Caves bear an eloquent testimony to the supreme skill and artistic sense of the age "Everything in these petals of flowers testifies to the depth of insight coupled with the greatest technical skill" In architecture also, great progress was made over the Maurya's The several temples of stone and brick at Sanchi, Deogarh and Bhitaragaon give us an idea of Gupta architecture As for the painting, the following paragraph is worth-quoting "The fragments of the wonderful frescoes still remaining on the walls are not only masterpieces of painting, but both in their vivid imagination and realistic portrayal of contemporary life, they give a striking impression of masterly creative impulses which were then stirring the mind of India". Indeed all the arts appear to have blossomed at the Gupta court in a manner worthy of the great rulers

Conditions of the People

The degree of happiness and contentment enjoyed by the people is roughly a measure of the level of civilization of that country In this sense, if not any other, the Gupta period is rightly described as a Golden age in the History of India With the disintegration and downfall of the Kushana power, there resulted political chaos and social anarchy In the absence of an orderly government, the life of the people became very unenviable There was gloom and darkness everywhere With the coming of the Guptas to power, a new era of peace and prosperity was ushered in India The tolerent and liberal outlook of the government bespeaks highly of the people and their governors The account of Fa-hien shows that the people enjoyed a very large measure of happiness and prosperity. Taxes were light and scarcity was never felt The orderly and efficient government during the reigns of the Guptas paved way for the development and growth of trade both internal and external Besides, the maritime activity was intense and hence resulted in the material prosperity of the people

V A Smith writing about the Gupta period says "The age of the Gupta kings presents a more agreeable and satisfactory picture than any other period in the history of Hindu India" This age is crowned by the various highly progressive activities in the social, political, cultural and religious fields . Once again the genius of the people brightened up and spread the golden rays

Q 5. Write on Fa-hien, the Chinese traveller, and his account of India

Ans The Chinese pilgrim, Fa-Hien visited in

fifth century He began his travels in 399, A D and finished them in 414 A D. He stayed in India for about eight years Being a devout Buddhist, he was on a missionary visit to India–a country where Buddha lived and preached the new faith. He had undertaken this pilgrimage to obtain the authentic text of the Vinaya Pitaka–Buddhist books on monastic desciplinc The Chinese traveller had undertaken a most adventurous trip to India After crossing the Gobi Desert and the Pamir Mountain he reached Takshashila and then went to Peshawar He went to Magadha and stayed at Patliputra where he saw the Mahayana and the Hinayan monasteries. These monasteries were the centres of learning and light and which attracted the students of various nationalities During his stay there, he made a deep study of Buddhist scriptures He returned to China after visiting Ceylon and Java He was in India during the reign of Chandragupta II i e from 404 A D to 411 A D

Though he was in India during the part of the reign of the famous Gupta ruler, he did not make any mention about him or his military glory It is very surprising that he did not give a vivid description of the country where he stayed for such a length of period

In spite of such Indifference he made some casual references to the general condition of the people From these references, we find that the people of India, during the reign of Chandragupta, were happy, contented and honest The Buddhist sentiment for living things was still persisting People ate neither garlic nor onions. Moreover, the Chandals, were considered to be socially

out-cast and lived away from the town Even if this were an exaggerated statement, it does lead us to believe that the "ahimsa" sentiment was still extraordinarily strong in Aryavarta.

He established public hospitals for poor people irrespective of any distinction of caste, colour and even nationality These public institutions were run on public charities Besides there were charitable institutions for the invalids, the orphans, the diseased and the crippled Human relations were governed by love, kindness and co-operation

The two defects from which the administration of a country may suffer are over-government or absence of government From the account of the Chinese traveller we learn the state did not much interfere in the peaceful conduct of the community life Besides there were very few crimes, robbery was little known, and whatever minor offences were committed, the award of punishment was only in fines Capital penalty was never inflicted Mutilation was considered necessary only in cases of open rebellion to the Government. Compared with the punishments of the Maurya age, these punishments were very mild. The government did not levy heavy taxes The revenue of the state was derived from the crown land The personnel of the state administration including the soldiers were paid regularly and the officers were honest, and they respected the liberty of the people

When Fa-hien visited India, Patliputra was at its glorious height and its citizens were fond of competing with each other in practising virtues and benevolence

The Ashoka palace was still in existence and Fa-hien was not able to believe that such a magnificient palace could be built by human hands. He concluded it to be the work of the spirits. There were in the city two Buddhist monasteries, one belonging to Hinayana sect and the other to Mahayana school Both these monasteries were famous as centres of learning The renowned teacher *Majesri taught at the Mahayana monastery.*

Buddhism was a popular religion in the North The Buddhist monks were respected by the kings and the people Rich gifts and endowments were given to such monasteries Further Fa-hien had been lucky to see a Buddhist procession at Patliputra. The procession carried Buddha's image in a five storied four-wheeled chariot. But on the whole, Fa-hien's account tells us the said story of the decline of Buddhism in India during the period of his visit. It is seen from his account that the famous Buddhist sacred places like Lumbini, Kushinagar, Bodhi Gaya and Kapilvastu which the Emperor Ashoka visited with his teacher for the holy pilgrimage were desolate and neglected during the Gupta period

Q. 6 Describe the administrative machinery of the Guptas

Ans The Gupta administration was based on the fundamental principles of Indian polity The seven basic elements were involved in the making of administration of the state. These basic elements or fundamentals were as follows The Swami, the Amatya, the Janapada, the Durga, the Kosha, the Danda and the Mitra. While Janapada represented the territorial division of the state, the rest represented the various essential functions of the State

The form of Government was absolute monarchy The kingship was hereditary But before naming his successor, the king would consult the high officials of the State The kings though enjoying unlimited power, were, as a rule, benevolent. The king was not merely the head of administration, he was also the representative of the Divine on the earth The source of his temporal power being the Divine, he was supposed to look after the well–being of the people Being the head of a paternal government he was the owner of the entire land in his State

In general outline the administration of the state was similar to one in the Maurya period The king was the undisputed head of the administration and was the source of all power The empire was divided into suitable territorial zones in charge of various administrative and judicial officers The centralised Government was very effective in welding the diverse elements of a vast empire into unity and also in effecting co–ordination of functions as well as of powers The king with the help of his cabinet which consisted of seven members, shaped the policy, and the entire administrative machinery was responsible for the successful implementation of the same. The important cabinet members were Mantrin, the king's confidential adviser and Sandhivigrahika, the minister in charge of peace and war Both these posts were often hereditary

The territorial divisons were called Bhukti, Desha, Pradesha, Vishya and the smallest division was the village, while the provinces (Deea, Bhukti) were in charge of

royal princes The other divisions were headed by important officers appointed by the king Every officer in-charge of a division was assisted by a local body of advisors representing Brahmanas, merchants, artisans and cultivators Thus the officer had to yield to the wishes of the people He could not be a tyrant nor could he revolt against the emperor The local body of advisors was the most important feature of the Gupta administation which ensured just and satisfactory Government The state did not interfere in the ordinary affairs of the people, and they pursued their daily persuits of life without any obstacle from the Government

There was not much change in the judicial administration As in the Maurya regime, the king was the fountain of justice He himself gave justice to his people in the capital Here he was assisted by judges and assessors in the provinces and the districts, his respresentatives administration As in the Maurya regime, the king was the fountain of justice He himself gave justice o his people in the capital. Here he was assisted by judges and assessors in the provinces and the districts, his respresentatives administred justice, while in the village, the village headman and the Panchayat settled the disputes Since crimes were very few, there was no elaborate code of regulation for trying criminal cases There was no capital punishment and the severest punishment in very grave cases consisted in depriving the culprit of his right hand

The chief source of revenue was rent from the crown-land and a share in the profit in trade, and custom duties The emperor received tributes from the vassal kings.

The administration, on the whole, was very equitable and lenient

Q 7. Mention the causes which led to the down-fall of the Gupta Empire and give a brief account of the petty kingdoms that sprang up on its ruins

Ans The Gupta Empire which was founded in 320 A D lasted for about two centuries and eventually met the usual fate of such empires of the past as well as future The two common causes of its downfall were internal dissensions and aggression from without

The first shake to the solidarity of the Gupta Empire came from the Pushyamitras who were a turbulent tribe But the main blow came from the Hunas who swooped over India in great numbers The third cause of the downfall was inherent in the hereditary form of monarchy A weak king would bring about the downfall of an empire to govern which he does not possess ability The successors of Skandgupta were incompetent and could govern such an extensive empire With the fall of the Gupta Empire, the political unity of India was once again lost And on the ruins of the Gupta Empire, many small kingdoms sprang up

The kingdom of Valabhi in Kathiawar asserted its independence. It enjoyed its prosperity till the Arab invaders destroyed it completely Malwa also became independent Yasodharman, the king of Malwa played a chief role in routing the barbarous Huna ruler Mihir-kula The kingdom of Thaneswar established its independence under the Vardhanas Under Harsha, a member of the Vardhana house, Thaneshwar grew into an empire The king Grahavarmana of Kanauj who rose to power on the ruins of the Gupta Empire, married the sister of Harasha.

CHAPTER X

THE HUNAS AND THE VARDHANAS

Q 1. Who Were the Hunas? Where did they come from? What effects did they leave on Indian history?

Ans The Hunas were the inhabitants of the Steppes of Central Asia. They were fierce and lived a nomadic life Like all nomadic tribes, they swooped upon the civilised people when they were faced with want and scarcity They were largely responsible for loosening the fabric of civilization Therefore, they were called "the Scourge of the Civilised World"

During the fifth century, the Hunas or the hordes of these savage people issued from Central Asia and divided themselves in two sections. One section went to Russia and then reached as far as the Roman Empire They shook the very foundation of the Roman Empire ·e other section which came to India was known as White Hunas of Ephathilitis They captured Kabul and Kandhar and first invaded the north-west of India during the reign of Kumargupta. This invasion was defeated by Skandagupta, the son of Kumargupta But later on, they swooped over India in such a large number that it was difficult for any Indian power to check their vigorous incursions in India They completely undermined the Gupta empire

Tormana was the leader of these barbarous people In 500 A D Tormana announced himself as the Maharajadhiraj (Emperor). He ruled over the northern

and western India He was succeeded by his son, Mihirkula in 502 A D He was an unmitigated savage and fiendishly, cruel Sakala or the modern Sialkot was the seat of his government His reign was characterised by acts of vandalism, brutalism and savagery Under the leadership of Yeshodharma of Mandsor, the feudatories of the Gupta rulers inflicted a crushing on Mihirkula and that brought the end of the Hunas in India However, Mihirkula went to Kashmir and by treachery murdered the king of Kashmir There his most hated regime came to an end when he died in 542 A D

Though the rule of the Hunas lasted for a very short time, their, invasion in India makes a turning point in the political and social history of India by weakening and shaking the very foundation of the Gupta Empire, they unsettled the political life especially in Northern, Western and Central India. Owing to the absence of a Central Government, political and social anarchy prevailed India again entered a dark period of political and social disintegration

Besides the Hunas became a part and parcel of the Indian community Owing to their admission to Indian society, the caste system became more complicated and less flexible to prevent the infiltration of the foreign blood in the higher ranks Rajputs were the descendants of the Gurjars and other Huna tribes. It is said that "the strong infusion of barbaric tribes lowered the high ethical standard of the Indo-Aryan tradition and favoured the growth of many vulgar superstitions "

death of his brother-in-law, he immediately marched upon Malwa and over-powered its king On his way homeward, he was treacherously murdered by Narendragupta the Sasanka king of Gauda in Central Bengal Harshavardhana succeeded his elder brother

The sources of information about the Vardhana dynasty are as follows

1 Inscriptions of this age give us the details about the genealogy of Harsha They are (i) The sonipat copper seal, (b) The Bankhera Plate, and (c) The Madhuban Plate (ii) Being a dramatist, Harsha wrote three plays in Sanskrit, namely, Ratnavali, Nagananda and Priyadarsika These plays give us valuable information about this period (iii) Bana was a biographer of Harsha and his "Harsha-Charita" is an important source of information about the Vardhana dynasty (iv) And lastly the notes of Hieuntsang or Yuan-chawang who visited India in the Harsha reign, i e 630 are equally reliable and valuable

Q. 3, Give an account of Harsha and estimate the importance of his reign for the history of ancient India,

Ans Harsha or Harshavardhana succeeded his elder brother Rajyavardhana in 606 A D He was only sixteen years old He reluctantly accepted the throne but did not wish to be crowned formally He was known as Prince Siladitya His rule which lasted for about forty years is memorable in Indian history He is sometimes described as one of the greatest kings, He achieved political unity in India once again R K Mukerjee

writing about Harsha says · "Harsha combines in himself some of the attributes and characteristics of both Samudragupta and Ashoka" His military achievements are comparable with those of Samudragupta

When he came to the throne, he had to avenge the murder of his elder brother and rescue his sister from the prison of Kanauj His initial wars, thus were wars of vengeance and not of aggression He went to Kanauj to liberate his sister from the prison but he found that she had effected her escape from the prison and was hiding in the Vindhya forest He rushed to her aid in the nick of time as she was about to commit suicide His next task was to punish Sasanka King who had murdered his elder brother First he effected an alliance with Bhaskaravarman of Kamarupa, and with his assistance he launched an intensive military campaign against the powerful king of Bengal In the war that ensured, Narendragupta was never completely overpowered, for we find from an inscription of the king that as late as 619 A D, he ruled over his kingdom independently But after a continual struggle Harha conquered the greater part of his kingdom To establish political unity in the northern India, he was persuaded to extend his influence over Nepal in the north and Sind in the West. Later on, he defeated Druvesena, the king of Vallabhi and married his daughter Besides he compelled the king of Assam to pay him homage. Thus the whole of northern India, from the Punjab to Assam including Sind, Kathiawar and Malwa came under his rule

In 620 A D Harsha sent his army to conquer the Deccan as he wanted to establish his political power

in the whole of India But he did not succeed in this design. The powerful Chalukya king, Pulakeshi II, resisted his powerful army According to the Chinese pilgrim, Harsha's army consisted of a body of 5000 elephants, a body of 20,000 cavalry and 50,000 foot soldiers However, Harsha had to be satisfied with the Narbada as his southern most boundary of his empire This was the first time in his otherwise successful career that he had to face defeat Lastly, he defeated the coast of Bay of Bengal.

In the last two decades of his career, his reign saw unbroken peace His relations with China strengthened the bond of freindship His mission returned accompanied by the Chinese mission in 643 A D Also he maintained the diplomatic relations with the kind of Persia Taranath notes that the king of Magadha exchanged gifts with the king of Persia and he adds that the king of Magadha cannot be other than Harsha. He died in 647 A D leaving no heir to inherit his kingdom. After his death, the empire was completely disintegrated He was the last great emperor of the Northern India

The empire which Harsha built was very extensive. It appears that Sind, Nepal, Assam and Kashmir accepted him as their overlord and paid him the customary tributes. But they enjoyed autonomy in their own kingdoms In the south, the Narbada formed his boundary, in the north, his empire included the modern parts of Bengal, a greater part of Bihar and Orissa, United provinces, Central and Western India and Southern Punjab

About his character, we can say in a nutshell that he was an ideal king Holding very high ideas about the duties and responsibilities of a king, he refused, in the first instance, to accept the crown, but later on, he accepted the responsibilities without accepting the formal crown

He shifted his capital from Thaneswar to Kanauj Kanauj was a well fortified city and beautiful in appearance There were a number of monasteries, stupas and well laid garden in this town For justice and liberality, his reign compares favourably with that of Ashoka. Like Samudragupta he was a great patron of arts end letters Besides he himself was a scholar, poet and dramatist Nagananda, Priyadarshika and Ratnavali were his three contributions in Sanskrit to the existing literature Also he proved himself to be a good grammarian Naturally, his court was attended by people vested in art and literature Bana, the author of Harsha-Charita, was a gem of his kingdom He championed, also, the cause of education

Like Ashoka, Harsha is known for his piety and religious tolerance In the beginning he worshipped the Sun Shiva, but later on, he embraced the Mahayana Buddhism under the teachings of Yuanchwang and the influence of his sister Rajyasri He spent as much time as possible in doing good deeds in performing religious duties and in prayers. Harsha "in his zeal for the law of piety forgot to eat and sleep" Being a devout Buddhist, he adopted the principle of 'Ahimsa' and forbade the slaughter of animals The breach of his law was followed by capital punishment Being a humani-

tarian, he built rest houses for travellers and hospitals for the poor and the needy He also built many monasteries

He was fond of convening religious assemblies to discuss the disputed points in religion and he took active part in such assemblies In honour of the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang, he convened one such assembly at Kanauj Twenty feudatory kings attended this assembly Besides, there were the followers of various religions. This assembly was a personal success for the Chinese pilgrim because he converted Harsha to his religion

Yuan Chwang attended one more religious assembly the sixth of its type at Prayaga There was a gathering of half a million of people The first three days were spent in the worship of images of the Buddha, Shiva and the Sun. At the termination of the assembly, Harsha, according to his usual practice, distributed lavish gifts to the poor and the needy. Yuancnawng reports that Harsha actually emptied his treasury by giving alms to all persons without any distinction of creed This he did once in every five years

Q. 4 Describe the administrative system of Harsha.

Ans. Very little is known about the administrative system of Harsha. Our principal source of information is the accounts of Yuan Chwang who visited India during the reign of Harsha, and Bana, the Court Poet, supplements this account There were many points in common with the administration of Harsha and that of the Guptas The empire was divided into provinces,

and each province was elected from the royal families The province was divided into districts and so on The king was the central figure in the entire administration The efficiency in the entire administration depended upon the type of organization and secondly upon the king To lessen the evils which are inherent in bureaucratic type of administration, the king kept a close and personal supervision He was very hardworking and industrious Due to his untiring energy, the administration was above board. Moreover, it was benign and benevolent

The King was assisted by a Council of Ministers, Mantri Parishad They were not mere advisors They exercised real influence Harsha himself was elected to the throne by the Mantri Parishad The king could not be an autocrat.

Harsha was humanitarian He built rest houses for travellers and these houses vere equipped with medical facilities which were given free Moreover, there was little interference from the State on the free movement of the citizen

The crimes were few and the standard of morality was quite high Thus there were very few instances where the public guardians were called upon to retrieve the law. But the penal code was very harsh The slaughter of criminals was strictly forbidden and the breach of this regulation was attended with capital punishment Mutilation of limb was frequent A very unusual practice was trial by ordeal. The alleged culprit was made to undergo certain tests Failure to pass through any one was deemed a clear evidence for the

commission of the crime The roads were not as free as during the reign of the earlier Guptas The Chinese pilgrim was plundered twice.

The Government maintained the records of the principal events of the day There was a separate department of records

Taxation was light. The principal source of income was land revenue One-sixth of the annual produce was the share of the Government Besides a cultivator had to render service to State for which he received payment. Other duties were light and the State made very few demands on the resources of the people The income of the State was equally divided into four parts and was spent on the expenses of the Government, state worship, for charitable purposes, for rewarding persons having high intellectual eminence and meritorious service to the State. Thus more than 3/4th of his income was spent on welfare activities

The army was divided into four classes : infantry, cavalry, elephants, and chariots Recruitment was voluntary. Payment was made direct by the Government

Q. 5 Give an idea of the social and economic conditions in times of Harsha.

Ans Yuan-Chwang has given detailed accounts of social and economic conditions of India, Bana, the biographer of Harsha, has supplemented the accounts of the Chinese pilgrim

Owing to the infiltration of the various foreign elements in the Hindu Society, the caste-s s em, the

onions and flesh But they were far from being puritans Yuan Chwang describes the people as "light hearted" They took special interest in dressing themselves Thanks to the manufacture of printed cotton cloth, silk and woollen fibres, the people had a wide choice in the selection of colour and design The existence of theatres, musical saloons and picture galleries indicates that they loved art and literature, and enjoyed life thoroughly. Their other pastimes were dancing, drinking and gambling Never-the-less people were intrepid and enterprising They undertook extensive sea journey both for commercial and political purposes

Due to their enterprising nature, people were prosperous and rich Trade both internal and foreign prospered like anything Towns and merchants were coming into great eminence New towns on the commercial routes sprang up and flourished Kanauj, Prayag, Mathura and Ujjain were flourishing centres of trade and commerce Trade gave a great impetus to the new industries as well old ones The cloth industry was flourishing There was an export of silk, cotton and woollen clothes The new industries were organised on the basis of large corporation a new development and also on the basis of gild with the growth of the trade and commerce, the problem of exchange of a variety of goods becomes complicated Cowries, gold and silver coins, were used to solve the above problem

In a nut-shell, people were prosperous, happy and upright Life was easy and comfortable There was neither want nor scarcity for any section of the people, while princes and merchants lived a luxurious life

Q. 6. Describe the state of learning and literature under Harsha.

Ans. Like Samudragupta, Harsha was a great admirer of artists, poets and authors. His spare hours were spent either in doing pious acts or in the pursuit of knowledge To his credit, he had three plays This dramatist and scholar encouraged learning, and thus attracted men of genius and learning The most famous centre of learning was the monastery of Nalanda or the University of Nalanda Nalanda was the 'Oxford of Mahayana'

Kumargupta laid the foundation of the Nalanda University Due to the help of his successors in respect of magnificent buildings, Nalanda became a full-fledged University. King Harsha gave very handsome grants to this famous ancient seat of learning Yuan Chwang, the famous Chinese pilgrim, visited this University and studied here for five years. He has left detailed and interesting account of this University. He says "The King of Bengal remitted the revenues of one hundred villages for the maintenance of the University"

The University was located in a quarter called Dharma banja It had three magnificent buildings called Ratna-sagar, Ratnodadhi and Ratno-Ranjaka Each building had more than five stories The most famous library was located in these buildings There were eight colleges, called Halls, and in all there were 300 rooms All intellectual and cultural activities were intensively cultivated and also encouraged

Education was completely free All the expenses including boarding and lodging charges and other miscell-

aneous charges were paid by the University. Learning by discussion was the main feature of this University. The standard of the University was very high The graduates of the Nalanda were respected in all parts of the civilised world

The curriculum was based on the literary and cultural books of Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism. About 100 lectures on various studies were delivered every day Roughly speaking for every batch of six students, there was one teacher The students numbering about 10,000 came from various parts of Asia No discretion was made with respect to caste, colour and religion Free and frank discussions were encouraged between students and teachers professing different faiths and cultures In short, Nalanda was a real University in its true meaning Metaphorically speaking, we call it the "Oxford of Mahayana."

Some of the special features of the Nalanda University were as follows Though it was pro-Buddhistic in its learning, the study of all the religions was provided for. It provided instructions in almost all branches of culture existing in those days There was no narrow specialization in studies, on the contrary lectures were provided on all kinds of arts, science, philosophies and religions. A student could change his subject or rather the course of studies whenever he felt a strong urge to do so The ultimate aim of the University was to inculcate a spirit-free and unbiased enquiry. India needs to-day more of such Universities

Harsha equipped a Vihara with a library 80 feet high Sanskrit was the language of the cultured class.

Instruction and discussions were in this language The state also used Sanskrit for all official purposes The well-known literary personalities of the period were Harsha, Banabhatta and Bhartiban Harsha is the author of three plays namely Naganada, Ratnavali and Prya-Darshika. He composed a text of grammar Banabhatta is the author of Harsha Charita (Biography of Harsha) and Kadambari Before he could finish Kadambari, Bana died Bhusan completed the masterpiece of his father. To the credit of Bhartrihari lies a collection of poems which were very popular.

Thus the Harsha period is known in history for its peace, prosperity and complex but enriched culture

Q 7 Write a note on Hiuen Tsang or Yuan Chwang.

Ans Yuan Chwang was a Chinese traveller who visited India during the reign of Harsha He hailed from a nobel family and was deeply interested in the teaching of Buddhism. At the age of 29, he took a most hazardous journey to India in 629 A D He reached Gandhara in 630 A D after a dangerous journey of 3000 miles His main aim in visiting India was to secure an authentic text of the Buddhist scriptures

His visit to India strengthened the cultural ties between India and China. When in India, he was a freind of Harsha Being a great scholar, he was able to throw challenges to the Brahmana and followers of other faiths in an open assembly His travel notes constitute the main source of our information about the political, economical and social conditions of India

He travelled through the length and breadth of India and collected relics, images of Buddha and manuscripts pertaining Buddhism He lived in India for 13 years When he returned to China in 644, he translated these scriptures in Chinese. On his return, he was given a great national welcome by the Chinese Emperor and the people

Q 8 Describe the religious conditions in India during Harsha's time.

Ans The decay which had set in Buddhism during the reign of the Gupta rulers continued Brahminical religion was gradually establishing its eminence A number of ascetic schools of philosophy sprang up around Brahmanical religion was gradually establishing its eminence A number of ascetic schools of philosophy sprang up around Brahmanism Thus, Brahmanism was showing signs of growth and development But the cult of Bhakti was common among the rest of the people The object of their devotion were Shiva and Shakti The worship of the Sun was practised by Harsha Thanks to the infusion of foreign culture in the Hindu Society, new forms of worship found their place in Hindu Society

Though the main religions were only three, namely, Jainism, Buddhism and Hindusm, each one of them had its own complex ramifications into various sects, cults and superstitions. But the interesting fact of the contemporary religious life is the complete harmony between the followers of various faiths Buddhism flourished along with Brahmanism Mahayana religion which incorporated many elements of Hinduism was more in

popular esteem than Hinayana variety which owing to its orthodoxy was waning in India There were in all 18 sects of Buddhism These divisions indicate the impact of various process of adjustment and accommodation, Buddhism was dying gradually King Harsha gave rich endowments to the various Buddhist monasteries, but inspite of such patronage, Buddhism was on the decline. Owing to the admission of various faiths and cults within the fold of Hinduism, it had no rival

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CHAPTER XI

THE RAJPUT AND THE DECCAN

Q Describe, in outline, the political disintegration that followed the death of Harsha

Ans In about 647 A D Harsha died without leaving an heir behind him. After his death his empire disintegrated into small kingdoms The political unity which he had established in the northern India went to pieces after his death A large number of small kingdoms sprang up throughout the country Generally, the Rajput princes had caputred the power in these kingdoms Consequently with the death of Harsha, the ancient Hindu period comes to a stop The period beginning with the death of Harsha is known as the medieaval period of Indian History. It is difficult to give a coherent and clear picture of northern India after the death of Harsha because of the absence of political unity The narrative becomes very complex and hence lacks clarity

Among the important political powers, that of Gurjara Pratiharas held the reigns of the Northern India for a long time The Gurjara-Pratiharas were discendents of the Gurjara tribe Originally, they were the inhabitants of Central Asia and followed the Hunas to India in the 6th century A D The Pratiharas claimed to be the descendants of Lakshamana, brother of Rama.

The Pratiharas were able to establish their empire in the northern India when the Hindu power was gradually waning The rule of these Rajput rulers lasted for several centuries, experiencing the tide and ebb of political power Thanks to the Pratihara dynasty that Northern India was saved from destruction at the time of Muslim conquest These Rajput rulers withstood the Arab invasion for nearly two centuries

The second centre of political power was located in Bengal Of course the history of Bengal after the death of Harsha is obscure Bengal had become an easy prey to its neighbours There was anarchy and absence of Government To restore peace and order in Bengal the local chiefs elected a new king Gopala He was elected on his merit and ability Gopala ascended the throne in about 765 A D and ruled for a short duration He founded the well–known Pala dynasty of Bengal and this dynasty flourished for more than four centuries Dharmapala, the son of Gopala and his grandson Devapala extended their power over the northern India and thus made Bengal one of the great powers of India The reigns of the Pala rulers "formed a period of beneficient and artistic activity Numerous tanks still testify to their zeal, for public works, and they proved the sincerety of their Buddhist faith by their generous patronage of learned men and monasteries

Besides the above two powers, there were many other small kingdoms which arose on the ruins of the Harsha empire They wete Nepal, Kashmir, Assam, Sind and Kathiawar

Q 2. Write a note on the origin of Rajputs

Ans. The Rajputs were bidding for power after the fall of Harsha empire. Their origin is obscure Many theories have been suggested to explain their origin

During the 5th and 6th centuries, many nomadics including the Hunas and the Gurjaras invaded India and made her their own home land They were gradually admitted in the Hindu Society "The upper ranks of the governing hordes of the Gurjaras and the Maitraks became the Rajputs Class, while the lower developed into Hindu castes of less honourable social status such as the Gurjaras, the Ahirs, the Jats and the Others" But in course of time, those who aspired to take place of the traditional class of Kshatriyas were called the Rajputs, while the rest were absorbed in the lower ranks of the Hindu society Among this class of Rajputs are included those who were by profession warriors but by birth they belonged to the native aboriginal tribes Being the protectors of society, they were given the honourable title of Kshatriya.

There is another story which aims to explain the mythical origin of the Rajputs According to the legend, the entire clan of the Kshatriyas was destroyed by Parasuram who was a Brahman ascetic The legend states as follows· "When the Brahman Parasu Rama,–'Rama with axe' had destroyed the race of the ancient Kshatriyas, men were masterless and impiety spread over the land The gods repented then of the evil they had wrought and repaired to Mount Abu, the abode of the holy Rishis, they created a new race of warriors who should rule the earth Out of the couldron of the fuel on Mount Abu they

brought the Parihars, the Ponwars, the Solankis and the Chauhans most famous of the Rajput class" But the legend instead of explaining the origin of the Rajputs reflects the miracle in the contemporary mind perhaps it alludes to a sacrifice performed to Purify the foreigners before their absorption into the Indian Society

Though these Rajputs had no common lineage, they soon acquired common culture and tradition A Rajput prince is considered to be an uncompromising warrior Either he wins the battle or dies fighting it He is the protector of the unprotected, the Brahman and the woman. The Rajput women would willingly court death to save their honour and chastity

Q 3. Write notes on. (1) The Early Chalukyas. (2) The Rashtrakutas and (3) The Pallavas.

Ans The Early Chalukyas . The Chalukyas were Rajputs of foreign origin. The Chalukyas founded their dynasty in the Deccan in the middle of the 6th Century A D at Vatapi or Badami in the Bijapur District Pulakesin I, one of the famous kings of the dynasty, began his rule in 550 A D He overpowered the kingdom of the Kadambas and performed the horse sacrifice (Ashvamedha) He had two sons Kirtivarman and Mangalesa who were great warriors Kirtivarman I (550 A D) succeeded his father. He expanded his kingdom by once again defeating Kadambas and annexed their capital Banabasi He prepared the ground for subsequent greatness of the Chalukyas In 597 his brother Mangalesa succeeded him to the throne He conquered Kurucol Districts, the

Kalachuris–the rulers of Chedi. Pulakeshin II, son of Kirtivarman I, established his claim to the throne by defeating his rivals. Owing to civil strife, the power of Chalukyas had weakened over the conquered provinces But Pulakesin II was able to suppress the revolts very successfully Moreover he overpowred the neighbouring powers of Kalinga, the Pallavas of Kanchi and the Cholas and thus established his claim to supremacy in the Deccan He repelled also the army of Harsha (620 A D) when Harsha desired to extend his boundary in the south beyond the Narbada Owing to his undisputed supremacy in the south, he was called Maharajadhiraj and Paramesvara His younger brother Vishnuvardhman was appointed Viceroy of the eastern territories. His capital was at Vengi and he established the dynasty of the Eastern Chalukyas. Pulakeśin II maintained diplomatic relations with Persia The chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang who visited his empire pays a high tribute to him and his subjects Pulakesin II suffered complete reverses at the hand of the Pallavas under Harasimhavarana I and died on the battle field. The successors of Pulakesin II had to fight with the Pallavas for their existence, but finally, the dynasty came to its end in 753 A.D. When last Chalukya King was overthrown by Kirtivarman II, the Rashtrakuta Chief.

The Chalukya kings professed Hindu faith. Like the previous Hindu rulers, they are tolerant of other faiths and gave encouragement to art and learning. The magnificent buildings and temples at Badami and Pattadkal testify to their generous patronage.

THE RASHTRAKUTAS ·

They were descendants of the Rajput tribe and were ruling in Maharshtra at the time of the fall of the Chalukyas of Badami. Dantidurga defeated the last Chalukya king and occupied all the territory held by him. The rule of this king proved unpopular and he was deposed by his uncle Krishna (760 A.D) Krishna I raised the glory of the Rashtrakutas During his regime, the rock-cut temple of Kailash at Ellora was built He was succeeded by his son Dhruva who defeated the Pratiharas and the Palas He and his son Govind III were recognised as paramount rulers over the whole of the northern India.

Amoghavarsha Nripatunga who ruled for 62 years was one of the most famous kings of his dynasty. He was the patron of Jainism He was a great scholar and wrote a work on poetics, "Kavirajamarga " His successors were weak and they brought about the fall of the dynasty

The Pallavas :

The origin of the Pallavas is not known After the fall of the Andhras in the 3rd century A D they came into existence Kanchi was their capital Simhavishnu was the first great ruler of this dynasty. He claimed to have subdued the Pandya, Chola and Chera Kings Mahendravarman I (600–625 A D) the son of Simhavishnu, was a great warrior, and patronised art and architecture. Many rock-cut temples were constructed during his regime He was defeated by Pulakesin II His successor Narasimhavarman avenged the defeat of

his father and killed Pulakesin II. He also humbled the Chalukya dynasty for some time.

The Pallavas were great builders During their regime, the art of hewing shrines out of rock and transforming caves into temples developed in South India The Pallava School of architecture and sculpture is one of the most important and interesting of the Indian schools. The wonderful Rathas or "Seven Pagodas" at Mahamallapuram are an eloquent testimony to the high state of the Pallava art

The eminent literary personalities of this period were Bhavabhuti, Visakhadutta, Narayana Bhatta and Rajasekhara. Bhavabhuti is the author of Malati Madhav, Mahavira Charita and Uttara-Ram Charita Udayana wrote on Nyayas, and Vaiseshika, and Vadhbhatta were authorities on medicine Vachaspati wrote critical commentaries on Sankya and Yoga systems The Indian literature went abroad and some of the books were rendered into the Arabic, Chinese and Central Asian languages.

Art And Architecture .

This period is vere rich in works of sculpture. The Chalukya king and the Pallavas of the South were patrons of art and architecture Many temples were built during the Chalukya regime The caves at Badami are proofs of the excellence of the art of sculpture. These temples were ornate.

The rock-cut temple of Kailash at Ellore, a masterpiec in sculpture was built during this period